

# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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*Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.*

SEPTEMBER 1973

VOLUME 29

NUMBER 3

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.  
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Cover: Adult Gannet off Ocean City, Dec. 23, 1972.  
Photo by Richard A. Rowlett.



## BEHAVIOR OF A BLACK RAIL

*Hal Wierenga*

On July 14, 1972, Professor Harold Wierenga and I went to Elliott Marsh in Dorchester County, and having heard several Black Rails (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) by midnight, we turned for home, feeling that the trip had been successful. However, one more Black Rail began singing loudly and incessantly near the road so we stopped again to check it out.

After searching the area with the spotlight, I started our tape, which very nearly matched this particular bird's "ki ki pour." He soon stopped calling, but after a minute or so, he rose and flew toward us, dropping back into the grass perhaps 15 feet short of us. We then saw and heard nothing except the tape for about five minutes. About to give up, we were then surprised to find him standing quietly right at my feet about a foot off the pavement of the Elliott Island road in the short mowed grass.

To our continued delight, he then walked slowly out onto the pavement, wandered slowly around my feet for a few minutes, and allowed me to reach down and catch him. We looked over his black bill, red eye, rusty nape, spotted back, etc. for about 15 minutes, and all the while he offered virtually no resistance, seemingly mesmerized by the tape (which we kept playing constantly) or the lights.

We then released him in the headlights, and he promptly flew about 50 feet and dropped into the grass out of sight. But further amazement followed! I started the tape again, and he slowly made his way over and under the grass right back to my feet, and walked around slowly and bewilderedly for 30 more minutes or so. Finally, he rose of his own accord and flew about 40 feet back into the marsh. Since it was by then after 1 a.m., we decided to intimidate him no more, and departed.

After his initial outburst, we never again heard his "ki ki pour" song. But he made a variety of soft clucking sounds, and at least half a dozen times he uttered a very loud, raucous series of Dunlin-like "jeers" which started slowly and softly and rose into an excited "jeering jumble" and then tapered off toward the end. Each of these boisterous and penetrating outbursts lasted for perhaps 10 to 15 seconds.

This entire experience seemed unbelievable to us, and certainly was unexpected from all that we had read about "elusive" Black Rails.

## SEA BIRDS WINTERING OFF MARYLAND SHORES, 1972-73

*Richard A. Rowlett*

## ABSTRACT

During the winter of 1972-73, studies were conducted to determine the status and distribution of pelagic species of birds occurring at sea as far as 38 miles east of Ocean City, Md. The wintering off-shore avifauna was found to be impressively rich in variety of species and numbers of individuals. Sightings included Fulmar and Skua, both first sight records for Maryland. Large alcids, especially Razorbills, were observed in unprecedented numbers and on five of the seven trips undertaken. Thick-billed Murre was sighted once and Dovekie, once. A Pomarine Jaeger was a mid-winter first for Maryland. Black-legged Kittiwakes were sighted on all seven trips, with age ratios consistently averaging about three adults to one immature. Likewise, Gannets were observed on all seven trips, 7.5 adults to one immature. Iceland Gulls were seen twice and Black-headed Gulls on three trips. Evidence of a definite migration was noted on Nov. 19, as Gannets were observed flying south in a narrow band, four miles wide, five to nine miles east of Ocean City, and Black-legged Kittiwakes, likewise, were heading south in a steady stream no closer than 14 miles east of Ocean City. Data accumulated from December through March suggest most pelagics occurring in Maryland waters during this period were truly wintering and not transients. This report is concerned primarily with the true pelagics normally found well away from the sight of land, and does not dwell on those "sea birds" commonly seen in immediate coastal waters.

## INTRODUCTION

Only within the past few years has interest been seriously generated by birders to journey off-shore in search of sea birds along the mid-Atlantic coast. Little has been recorded regarding the occurrence of sea birds off the Maryland coast during the milder seasons of the year, while virtually nothing has ever been published on the distribution and status of winter pelagics in the Atlantic at Maryland latitudes.

The previous lack of enthusiasm for winter sea birding can probably best be attributed to the intense rigors that accompany the season. For landlubbers, participating in winter pelagic trips requires an excess of hard-core desire and stamina to endure the often grueling hours. Seas are rough, winds are cold, and it is a rare day when one stays dry. Between birds, there are often long, boring, bone-chilling periods that are filled with only the vast void of endless water and those moments of stress resulting in the culmination of a queasy stomach.

Between Nov. 19, 1972 and Mar. 25, 1973, often accompanied by others, I made a series of seven pelagic trips originating at Ocean City, Worcester Co., Md. (38°19'N, 75°13'W), venturing off-shore to maximum distances of 14 to 38 miles. During this period, much data were accumulated regarding the previously unknown status and distribution of a vast array of pelagic avifauna. The trip totals, by species, are summarized in Table 1.

All trips except one were made aboard two different sport-fishing "head-boats," which, in winter, can transport up to 75 hard-core, non-tourist type fishermen to areas where Codfish (*Gadus callarias*) is

considered the prize catch. Birders were allowed to ride along at a reduced passenger fare. Observing birds in this manner was truly a random transect, leaving no chance for chasing unknowns or rarities. The one exception was the trip of Feb. 3 when a head-boat was chartered specifically for a day of sea birding. This was the only trip when "chumming" was done to attract birds close to the boat.

Table 1. Winter Pelagics Off Ocean City, Md., 1972-73

	date	Nov 19	Dec 23	Jan 13	Jan 19	Feb 3	Mar 3	Mar 25
	max. miles	14 mi.	20 mi.	20 mi.	20 mi.	30 mi.	38 mi.	15 mi.
Species								
Red-necked Grebe								1
Fulmar						1		
Gannet		110	85	50	90	165	120	20
Eider sp.					1			
Parasitic Jaeger		2						
Pomarine Jaeger		1				1		
Pom/Par Jaeger sp.		1		1	1			1
Skua				1				
Iceland Gull			1				1	
Black-headed Gull		1				1		1
Black-legged Kittiwake		75	102	16	19	200+	2	1
Razorbill			1	3		4	4	8
Thick-billed Murre							1	
Murre sp.						1		1
large alcid sp.			1			4		7
Dovekie			1					

#### MIGRATION, WINTER VISITANTS, AND WRECKS

Scoters, loons, and grebes are not regarded as truly pelagic, and shall not be discussed other than to just mention them as a part of the off-shore avifauna. These birds typically are found in the littoral zones, which extend through the intertidal areas to the continental shelf.

Migrating strings of scoters were seen most abundantly during October and November, and were usually restricted to within two miles of shore. In winter, scoters are usually gathered close to shore in the surf, around the Ocean City jetties, and in Sinepuxent Bay. During the cold winter months, there always seemed to be a few scoters, most commonly White-winged, in an area two to four miles from shore.

Loons were encountered regularly to the outer limit of the study which was 38 miles. From October through December, both Common and Red-throated Loons were seen migrating, north to south, usually as singles. During January through March, both loon species were regularly seen, with the Common Loon out-numbering Red-throated, about 4:1.

No appreciable migration of grebes could be detected. However, during the course of the winter, 1 Red-necked and 6 Horned Grebes were flushed from the water beyond 10 miles from shore.

Evidence of a true migration of pelagic birds was observed only on the Nov. 19 trip. The migration patterns of Gannets and Black-legged Kittiwakes were most interesting. On the morning of Nov. 19, the head-boat passed through a 4-mile-wide belt of southward flying Gannets, located 5 to 9 miles off-shore. Passage through the belt took about 40 minutes. Very few Gannets were subsequently seen during the next 3 hours between 9 miles and where the boat was anchored at 14 miles. On the return trip, we once again passed through this migrating belt of Gannets. I recall observing a similar situation with Paul DuMont on a trip on Nov. 14, 1971; only then, the western edge of the band was 10 miles from shore. Ed Brex, a Captain of one of the local head-boats has often described similar observations to me, always emphasizing the narrow belt of "cod gulls" occurring in the late fall along the coast each year. Whether this is a characteristic migration pattern along all of the Atlantic coast is apparently not known.

On this same Nov. 19 trip, the first encounter with modest numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes occurred while the boat was at anchor, 14 miles ENE of Ocean City. For 2 1/2 hours, kittiwakes streamed by the boat, appearing from the NNE, occasionally pausing briefly around the boat, then continuing in a southerly direction, seldom being seen in more than one's or two's.

All additional observations of Gannets and kittiwakes during the course of the winter suggested purely wintering individuals and milling feeding flocks. It was common to find small flocks of Gannets resting on the water, whereas on the trips of Nov. 19, 1972 and Nov. 14, 1971, when migration was in progress, it was indeed rare to see this. Black-legged Kittiwakes, on the other hand, were never discovered resting on the water. On subsequent trips after the Nov. 19 migration, kittiwakes virtually seemed to materialize, usually as singles, but sometimes in flocks of up to 35 as on Feb. 3. They would circle the boat once or twice, then disperse, usually in easterly directions. By March, most of the kittiwakes had disappeared. Whether they had gone north or farther out to sea is unknown. Gannets during March certainly had not displayed characteristics of migration, as they continued to lounge near a Russian fishing fleet and in the shipping lanes.

Although alcids occurred in unprecedented, relatively large numbers for this latitude during the winter of 1972-73, there was never a feeling that a true migration was occurring. All at once, alcids just began to appear, and as the season progressed, the numbers seen continued to climb gradually, but steadily, with a peak of 16 large alcids (at least 50% Razorbills) counted on Mar. 25.

In past years, the extent of an influx of alcids into the mid-Atlantic region has been estimated by the occurrence of "wrecks" along the Atlantic coast and even inland. A "wreck" occurs when numbers of alcids are blown inland by a northeast storm. These birds often wind up in odd places such as on city streets, fields, and airports. When alcids are grounded, there is little chance that they will get airborne again, as they are incapable of taking off from level ground. In the mid-Atlantic

region, the most familiar wreck involves Dovekies, and these normally occur during strong northeast storms in the later part of November or early December.

"Wrecks" and the so-called "eruptive migration flights" may best be explained by describing a simple meteorological event (Fig. 1). When a high pressure area moves southeast out of eastern Canada, for example, and approaches a northeastward moving low pressure area, the result is a funneling of strong northeasterly winds (Tuck, 1961). This might account for the great Dovekie concentration observed by John H. Buckalew in January 1949 off Ocean City (Stewart & Robbins, 1958). Such storms are most common during the autumn and early winter months.

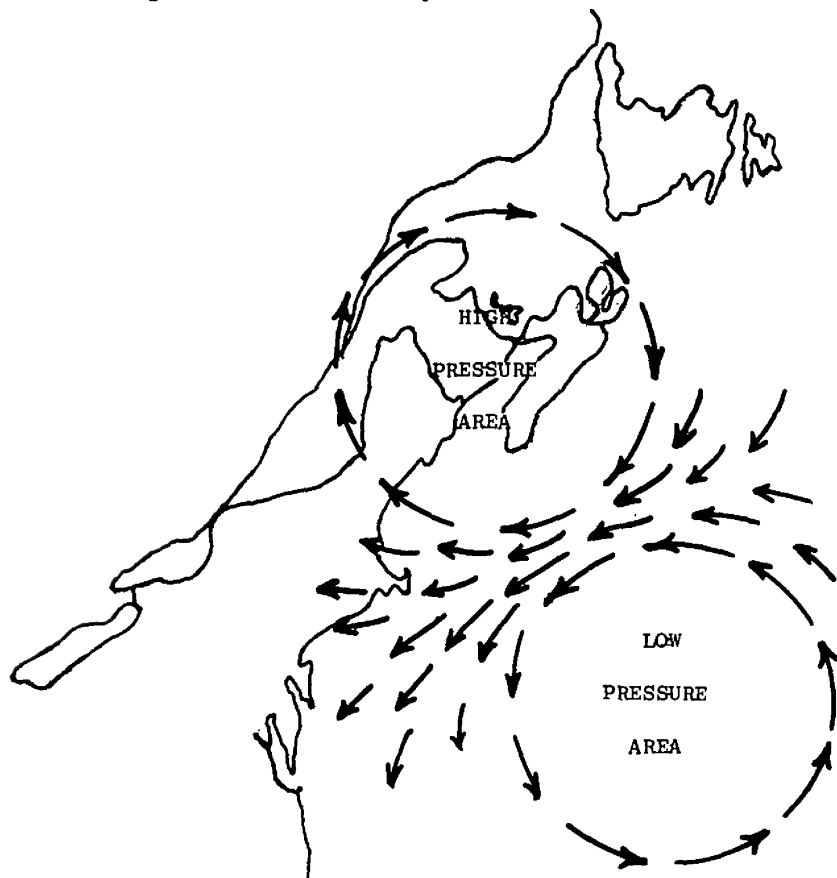


Fig. 1 (from Tuck, 1961)

An example of just how effective a northeast gale can be on flying birds caught in this squeeze might best be described as follows. A bird flying southwest at 30 mph with a NE 50 mph gale tail wind will be carried 80 miles per hour, while a bird struggling northeast into the same



gale at 30 mph will actually be carried southwest at 20 miles per hour! One can easily see how a stand-off between two opposing air masses, or even a series of similar storms during a short period of time, could result in the displacement of birds many hundreds of miles.

The winter of 1972-73 certainly was not a Dovekie flight year, but from January through April, all along the mid-Atlantic coast, not including Maryland sightings which are discussed separately, there were at least 15 alcids representing three species, of which 13 were picked up dead or dying from being oiled. Of these 15, 11 were Razorbills, mostly in New Jersey, 3 were Common Murres, one of which was found on the beach at Back Bay, Va., and 1 was a dead Thick-billed Murre in New Jersey. These "wrecks" happened to correspond nicely with the observations made at sea in Maryland waters, although one wonders if the oiled birds wrecked on the beaches may tend to distort the true picture of abundance of healthy birds at sea. The fact that so many of these beached birds were oiled is certainly interesting, but the culprit is unknown at this writing.

#### ECOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECTING WINTERING SEA BIRDS

Attempts to correlate and attribute various ecological factors to the vast array of sea birds present off Maryland shores is indeed difficult. Fishing in general could best be described as poor. Water temperatures during the observation period ranged from 45°F on Nov. 27 to 39°F through January and February, and warming into the low 40's in March. Had it been possible, it certainly would have been useful to have collected plankton samples and other marine life at various spots, particularly in the areas where feeding flocks seemed to concentrate.

There were at least three areas where observers could look forward to seeing feeding birds, especially alcids. The best spot for Razorbills was along a submerged north-south ledge, five miles long, located 18 to 20 miles ESE of Ocean City. Razorbills were encountered only in this area on 3 of the 5 trips on which they were seen. The Skua seen on Jan. 13, and the Fulmar on Feb. 3, were also seen here.

Another choice area was in the vicinity of the Russian fleet, which numbered at least three small trawlers at any one time. The fleet maintained itself all winter about 30 miles due east of Ocean City, and always seemed to have a "resident" flock of gulls and Gannets ever alert for garbage and offal discarded from the trawlers. There was a conspicuous bitterness of Ocean City fisherman toward the Russians, who were regarded as infringing on the local sport-fishing industry by presumably trot-lining large quantities of Codfish, and thus leaving few for the sportsman. At least this was the reason the head-boat captain used to pacify weary fishermen after a poor day.

The third area where concentrations of sea birds were noted was in the Delaware Bay shipping lanes, located 30 to 35 miles east of Ocean City. Though only two trips went this far, several flocks of gulls and Gannets were often seen following, particularly the north-bound cargo



vessels and tankers. Also, small flocks of resting Gannets were often flushed from the water, and on the Mar. 3 trip, an adult Iceland Gull, 4 Razorbills, and a Thick-billed Murre passed close by the head-boat while at anchor, 38 miles out, along the eastern edge of the lanes. Understandably, ships coming in from the high seas often "drag" birds along, especially if trash or garbage is dropped overboard regularly. As expected, vessels south-bound out of the Delaware Bay had few birds following, and nothing other than uninteresting gulls.

Obviously, a great deal more sophisticated study must be undertaken to determine what eco-marine factors contribute to the occurrence of wintering sea birds in mid-Atlantic and Maryland off-shore waters.

### "CHUMMING"

The only full-hearted attempt to attract birds with "chum" was done on the charter trip of Feb. 3. Thanks to the valiant efforts of David Holmes, who dispersed 100 pounds of coarsely ground beef suet in small amounts at regular intervals, there was always a cloud of birds consisting of Herring Gulls, Gannets, and kittiwakes swarming around the boat. Beef suet was found to be quite suitable for the winter trips. It is not messy, and when thrown overboard, the suet scatters nicely in all directions, and it floats. When coarsely ground, it is in nice bite size morsels and quite attractive to gulls and even Gannets. Sea birds are noted for their keen senses of sight and smell, and a boat with a flock of birds around it is sure to attract more birds. The curious little kittiwakes held little interest in the chum, but apparently were briefly investigating all of the commotion before flying off.

On the trip of Feb. 3, chumming was not begun promptly from shore, so there was a period when there were no birds following the boat at all. When a lone Herring Gull was seen about six miles out of the Ocean City inlet, Dave began slinging suet overboard. Within minutes, birds began to literally materialize, and streamed in from "nowhere," until as many as 75 to 100 birds were present at any one time. The curiosity seekers, which normally roam the high seas and might not have otherwise been seen had it not been for the chum, included 200+ Black-legged Kittiwakes, Fulmar, and Pomarine Jaeger. Alcids, namely the Razorbills, did not show any response whatsoever when chum was thrown toward them.

Beef suet, though apparently quite satisfactory in the winter, was found to be virtually ineffective during the warm summer months. In fact, in May and July, 1973, in the gulf stream off the North Carolina Outer Banks, the suet seemed offensive and tended to repulse those few birds that even bothered to investigate the smelly, greasy, rotting mess.

People running pelagic trips off California have found popped popcorn to be an excellent type of chum. Certainly, the offal from commercial fish cleanings would be most ideal because of its tremendous carrying odor. But, it is extremely messy, and it takes one with a strong stomach to dispense it. Although apparently never tried yet, I have long felt that popcorn or puffed wheat soaked in fish oils, particularly cod

liver oil would make the most effective type of chum, although obtaining the fish oils could be somewhat uneconomical. Head-boat captains describe pouring discarded fish oils in little spots which will then spread, forming a slick and attract fish as well as a wealth of birds.

#### COUNTING BIRDS AT SEA

Effectively conducting an accurate census of birds at sea is beset with problems. Foremost, sea birds are always on the move, and when running a transect, it is virtually impossible to determine what percentage of the birds seen are repeats. It is almost certain that only a small percentage of the birds actually present will be counted at the time of transection.

When counting sea birds, one should strive for accuracy in estimating overall magnitude or volume present for a given area. Trying to count every individual is impractical. Reasonable estimates regarding the magnitude of a sea bird movement can best be determined when observing and counting birds from shore during on-shore gales. When birds are wind blown by strong on-shore winds, there is a tendency for sea birds to "pile up" along coastal beaches (Fig. 2). Also, magnitude can be accurately estimated when transecting a migration band, as on Nov. 19, when on the first transect of the Gannet belt, I recorded 64 birds in 40 minutes, and on the return, 32 birds in 40 minutes (Fig. 3).

The problems with conducting accurate counts develop when there are wandering flocks of feeding birds. In Fig. 4, the path of a Gannet is hypothetically traced during the course of the Feb. 3 charter trip. I have chosen the Gannet for this example because these birds seem to demonstrate peculiarities which I have come to feel are characteristic at least with wintering birds of this species. The selected Gannet first would follow the boat for awhile, then stop to rest in the water and be forgotten by the counter. The Gannet then returns to the boat, makes a few passes, and wanders off out of sight, to return an hour later at another point in the transect. All it would take would be 30 or 40 Gannets doing this all day while the boat continues to cut a transect, and the count could be exaggerated way out of true proportion. I actually observed this type of behavior with a peculiarly marked juvenile Gannet, recognizable as the same bird, that periodically returned to the boat over a time lapse of seven hours and 35 miles.

The counts of Gannets shown in Table 1, specifically on trips after Nov. 19, are educated estimates based on a combination of factors. Rough counts were made every 10 to 15 minutes. Ratios of adults to sub-adults and juveniles in various plumages were observed, and special peculiarities regarding certain individuals were all noted mentally. With these observations as well as the behavior of individual birds in mind, an estimate was made of the total population encountered.

Black-legged Kittiwakes, on the other hand, are among the most pelagic of birds. Seldom seen near the beaches, these birds are noted for their roaming of the high seas, and are often encountered thousands of

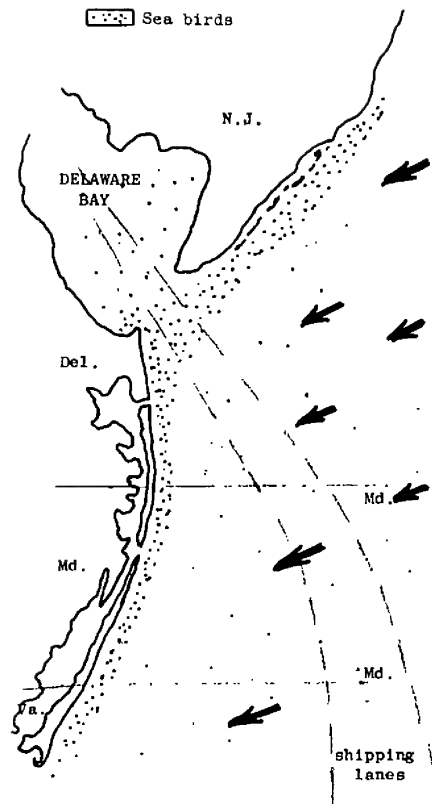


Fig. 2. The effect of northeasterly gales on sea birds.

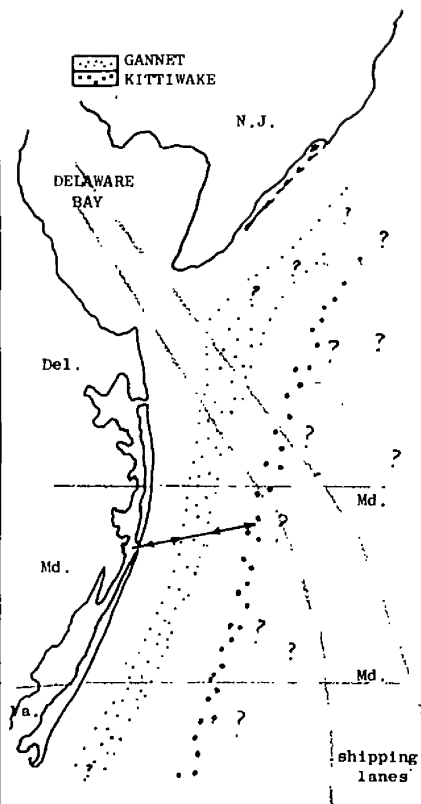


Fig. 3. Migratory belts of Gannets and possibly Black-legged Kittiwakes on Nov. 19. The transect is marked with arrows.

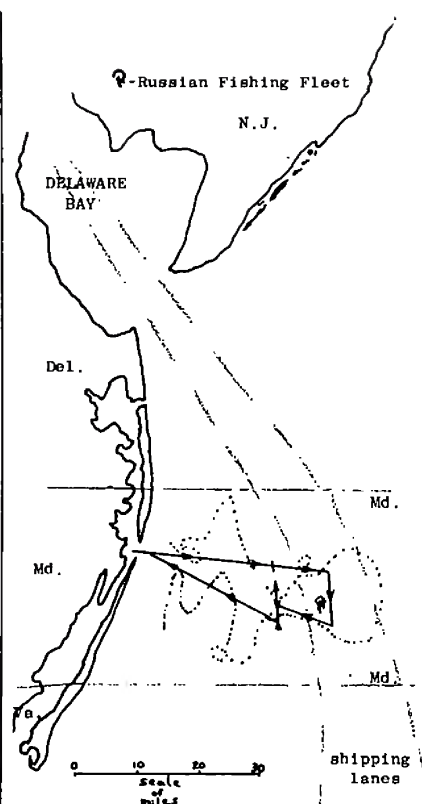


Fig. 4. Hypothetical path of a Gannet. Note how often the same individual could have been counted. Feb. 3 transect is marked with arrows.

miles from land (Shackleton & Stokes, 1968). Unlike the Gannets and Herring Gulls, the kittiwakes displayed no interest in what the boat had to offer, and merely paused out of curiosity before moving on. In most instances, kittiwakes came to the boat from the northeast, routinely checked out the boat, then headed off, seaward, usually to the east or southeast. Very few birds came from the north, west, or south. Therefore, counting kittiwakes was far more pleasant because of the feelings of accuracy, and that each individual counted was probably a different bird.

Alcids usually did their best to get out of the way of the boat, and were never attracted to it or the chum. Therefore, each individual was counted separately.

#### ANNOTATED LIST

This list principally pertains to those species that are typically pelagic by nature and normally shun the intertidal areas along the coasts. Therefore, loons, grebes, eiders, scoters, and the commoner gulls are not discussed in this report, even though they are often a common part of the off-shore avifauna. The only exceptions involve interesting off-shore sightings of normally uncommon Maryland species. A review of previous Maryland records of unusual species is presented, as is the speculated status of these sea birds occurring in Maryland latitudes. Corroborating observers are initialed and are identified at the conclusion of this summary.

RED-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps grisegena*). A single bird was identified on the water, 10 miles E. of Ocean City, on Mar. 25 (PGD, RAR).

FULMAR (*Fulmarus glacialis*). First Maryland sight record. A light phased bird circled our chartered boat, 18 miles ESE of Ocean City on Feb. 3, as close as 50 yards, and was in view and studied well for about 90 seconds (PGD, DH, CSR, RAR, HW, mob). All those initialed identified the bird *independently* from separate corners of the boat at about the same time. Although this sighting is Maryland's first, I suspect that further field work at sea will show this species to be a regular but rare part of the winter pelagic avifauna at Maryland latitudes.

Within the past century, this species has been rapidly increasing in numbers. This might be attributed to a combination of two factors. Some authorities suggest that the ancestors of the northern Fulmar were actually a population of the southern (Antarctic) Fulmar which successfully crossed the equator and became established in the cold arctic and sub-arctic regions. The northern Fulmar is truly pelagic and is restricted to roaming the high seas, where it thrives on man's garbage from North Atlantic shipping and on offal discarded from fishing trawlers.

GANNET (*Morus bassanus*). The Gannet seems to be one of the more common and regular winter residents in Maryland's off-shore waters. Observations on Nov. 19 clearly showed Gannets in a southward migration, 5 to 9 miles from shore. Very few were encountered beyond this belt on this date. Gannets seen on all subsequent trips to the end of the

observation period were assumed to be wintering individuals. It is especially interesting to note that as the season progressed, the Gannets were seen farther and farther from shore, perhaps because of a seaward drift of favored food source.

Table 2.

		Nov 19	Dec 23	Jan 13	Jan 19	Feb 3	Mar 3	Mar 25
Age ratios of Gannets	Adult	95	70	43	85	135	117	18
	Immature	15	15	7	5	30	3	2
	Total	110	85	50	90	165	120	20

EIDER (*Somateria* sp.). A single bird (immature or female) was seen with a small flock of scoters on Jan. 19, 20 miles NE of Ocean City (PGD, HM, RAR, CW).

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*). One individual, perhaps a late migrant, was observed on Nov. 19, 14 miles ENE of Ocean City (BB, PGD, RAR). A *dark phased* individual was briefly observed on Feb. 3, 18 miles ESE of Ocean City (PGD, RAR, HW, mob); this is the first winter record of this species in Maryland.

There has been an interesting increase in jaeger sightings in recent winters off the mid-Atlantic coast. The Pomarine Jaeger seems to be a later fall migrant than the Parasitic and has been the most frequently identified species during the winter. It should be looked for as a rare winter visitant.

PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). Two probable late migrants were seen on Nov. 19, 14 miles ENE of Ocean City (BB, PGD, RAR). There have been a few winter sightings in recent years to the south, along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on Dec. 31, 1972 (*Am. Birds* 27:258), and on the Bodie-Pea Island, North Carolina, Christmas Counts of 1971 and 1972 (*Am. Birds* 26:279, 27:279). The Parasitic Jaeger could probably be looked for as a rare winter visitant.

PAR/POM JAEGER (*Stercorarius* sp.). There were four birds, all observed on different dates during the study period, that could not be ascribed to species. Jaegers in general should be looked for especially where large feeding flocks of sea birds have gathered off-shore. Since the Pomarine Jaeger seems to display a preference for pursuing gulls, it would appear to be the most likely jaeger to expect during the winter. The smaller Parasitic tends to prefer harassing terns which cannot put up quite as hard a struggle. Since most of the terns are gone from Maryland in the winter, I would expect few Parasitics to linger.

An interesting correlation might be drawn here. The 1972 Bodie-Pea Island, N.C., Christmas Count recorded 1,329 Forster's Terns and 2 Parasitic Jaegers, the national high for both species! (*Am. Birds* 27:551).

SKUA (*Catharacta skua*). First Maryland sight record. One adult was identified briefly around noon on Jan. 13, while the head-boat was at anchor 20 miles ESE of Ocean City. The Skua burst from "nowhere" upon a feeding flock of 5-7 Gannets, about 200 yards away (RAR). My immediate impression was that the bird was a hawk (rounded wings and buteo-like tail), but it seemed larger or at least bulkier by comparison to

the thinner bodied Gannets. The golden brown body and those enormous white patches in the wings rendered it unmistakable. I honestly think that a Skua in good plumage, as apparently this bird was, could be identifiable at any distance with favorable light. Unfortunately, the plumage marks were visible for only a few seconds while the Skua pursued a Gannet straight up then back to below the water line. The Skua then flew off below the water line, flying low and powerfully into the sun. I was so electrified by this episode that those precious few seconds passed before I could yell "SKUA!" to Charlie Vaughn. By then, the bird had already become a silhouette in the glare of the sun. Charlie did agree on the heavy gull-like flight which was so powerful and effortless.

The status of the Skua over most of the northwest Atlantic is virtually unknown. Presumably most of the western Atlantic birds winter on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. However, within the past three years, there has been a surge of sightings along the mid-Atlantic coast. Skuas have been identified at sea off the Virginia coast (Scott and Cutler, 1971), and during strong on-shore winds on Hatteras Island, N.C. (Buckley, 1973). Also, there have been rumors of sightings along the continental shelf off New Jersey. The Skua may turn out to be at least a casual visitor off the Maryland coast.

ICELAND GULL (*Larus glaucooides*). A bird in first winter plumage remained close to the boat for about 30 minutes, 20 miles ESE of Ocean City, on Dec. 23, during a "sea-sickening" storm with rain, easterly gale winds, and heavy seas (RAR). An adult, flying steadily north was seen just beyond the shipping lanes, 38 miles E of Ocean City on Mar. 3 (RAR, NS).

Observations on pelagic trips off New Hampshire suggest that the white-winged gulls are more likely to be encountered in greater numbers more consistently, well off-shore rather than on-shore. Exceptions may occur of course around universal collecting places for gulls such as dumps and fish processing plants. The Iceland Gull is probably uncommon in Maryland's off-shore waters.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus ridibundus*). This species was encountered off-shore three times. Perhaps this rare European gull, which is being seen with greater frequency in recent years, is really more "typical" in the pelagic situation, as the white-winged gulls appear to be. All sightings were of single individuals on Nov. 19 (10 mi.), Feb. 3 (20 mi.), and Mar. 25 (15 mi.) (PGD, RAR). In comparison, it is interesting that few Bonaparte's Gulls were seen beyond 3-5 miles from shore.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*). The Black-legged Kittiwake, recorded on all 7 trips, was found to be one of the most abundant species among the mid-Atlantic avifauna during the winter, and was seen repeatedly in record numbers in Maryland waters. Except for Nov. 19, when there was an apparent migration of single individuals passing over the anchored boat from north to south, 14 mi. ENE of Ocean City (BB, PGD, RAR), the kittiwakes appeared to be wandering wintering individuals. With the exception of the vicious storm on Dec. 23, when many kittiwakes remained close to the anchored boat 20 mi. ESE of Ocean City, the birds generally paid little attention to the boat. On Feb. 3, the chumming



efforts produced an enormous flock of "trash" gulls which must have been responsible for attracting hordes of the inquisitive kittiwakes (200+). Like jaegers, the kittiwakes seemed to virtually materialize out of the "blue," and on the Feb. 3 trip came to the boat in rather tight flocks numbering up to 35, circled the boat once or twice and dispersed over the vast expanse of ocean (RAR, mob). By March, most had mysteriously vanished, except for fleeting glimpses of 2 on the 3rd, and 1 on the 25th.

Kittiwakes appear to be erratic wanderers, capable of roaming the entire ocean during the non-breeding season. Before the pelagic trips during the winter of 1972-73, the kittiwake was regarded as a "casual visitor to coastal areas" (Stewart & Robbins, 1958). Indeed, casual to the coast, as during the many coastal trips I made during the winter, I saw but one Black-legged Kittiwake on shore, and that one was apparently a wind-borne bird resting on the beach at Cape Henlopen, Del. on Dec. 24.



Immature Black-legged Kittiwake  
Photo by Charles Vaughn, Feb. 3

Table 3.

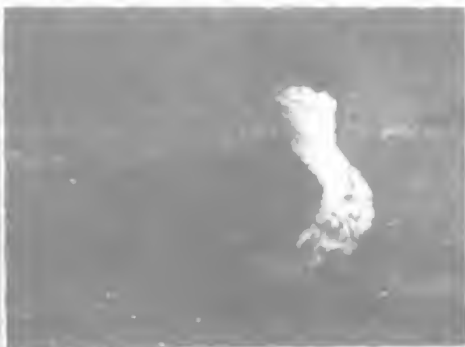
		Nov 19	Dec 23	Jan 13	Jan 19	Feb 3	Mar 3	Mar 25
Adult		62	87	11	18	125+	1	0
Age ratios	Immature	13	15	5	1	75+	1	1
of kittiwakes	Total	75	102	16	19	200+	2	1

RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*). The Razorbill was the "common" alcid in Maryland waters this winter. This species was found on 5 of the 7 off-shore trips, and no fewer than 20 individuals were identified. There are only 4 previous sightings in Maryland.

The first Razorbill was seen only briefly between swells during that dreadful storm, 20 miles ESE of Ocean City on Dec. 23 (RAR). A "flock" of three was observed closely as they flew past the boat while anchored, 20 miles ESE of Ocean City, on Jan. 13 (RAR, CRV).

On the Feb. 3 charter trip, at least 4 single individuals were positively identified, including an oil-soaked bird, totally incapable of flight, which was captured with a dip net. When the oiled Razorbill was first encountered, it appeared healthy and remained calm in the water, but as the boat slowly approached "for a closer look," we realized that the bird was oiled, as it began trying desperately to fly.

Unable to do so, it began diving. Attempts to capture it in the hand net seemed futile, as it was always just out of reach. David Holmes began



Razorbill

Photo by Charles Vaughn, Feb. 3



throwing chum to induce it to approach the boat on its own. The bird steadily approached, but I think this was out of sheer exhaustion. Upon reaching the side of the boat, the Razorbill began jumping out of the water repeatedly striking the side of the boat as if struggling to find some stable spot upon which to rest. The Razorbill was then easily rescued with the hand net. The bird was well photographed, then loaned to the Baltimore Zoo, where a few weeks later, it died, as did Maryland's first specimen when the bird was inadvertently destroyed (RAR, mob).

On Mar. 3, 4 birds were seen within 20 minutes (1,2,1), possibly migrating past our anchored boat, 38 miles E of Ocean City (RAR, NS). On Mar. 25, 8 Razorbills were all well seen sitting on the water, 10 to 15 miles E of Ocean City; there were also 8 additional large alcids whose identity could not be determined (PGD, RAR, H&HW).

The four previous records of Razorbills in Maryland are as follows: A Razorbill was observed on the barrier island 2 miles south of Ocean City by Alexander Wetmore on Dec. 4, 1926 (Wetmore, 1928). John H. Buckalew observed a single bird on Feb. 3, 1938 near the former Isle of Wight Coast Guard Station in North Ocean City (Stewart & Robbins, 1958). Dick Kleen with 5 other observers watched a Razorbill at 15 feet in the Ocean City inlet on Jan. 26, 1960 (Robbins, 1960). And Robert Warfield observed a bird from the Ocean City inlet, 300 feet off-shore in a calm sea on Jan. 22, 1967 (Robbins, 1967).

The status of the Razorbill in Maryland waters might be considered analogous to the eruptions of winter finches. Some years there may not be any, while in others, the species could be relatively "common."

[COMMON MURRE (*Uria aalge*)]. Although there is no record for the Common Murre in Maryland, it is included on this list because 3 were identified north and south of the state this winter. Two were found along the New Jersey coast, including an oiled bird that was captured alive. On the beach at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Va., another was picked up alive (Scott and Cutler, 1973).

THICK-BILLED MURRE (*Uria lomvia*). A bird identified as a Thick-billed Murre flew past the anchored boat, 38 miles E of Ocean City, on Mar. 3, during the same 20 minute span as the little flight of Razorbills (RAR).

There are 3 previous Thick-billed Murre sightings in Maryland. A specimen was collected at Harve de Grace, Harford Co. on Nov. 5, 1899 (Stewart & Robbins, 1958). A bird was taken in Kensington, Montgomery Co. on Nov. 24, 1899, while on the same day, 2 freshly killed specimens were offered for sale in the Washington, D.C. market (Stewart & Robbins, 1958). All three birds were probably waifs of a northeaster. After a severe northeaster, a wrecked bird was found sitting in the snow in Baltimore on Mar. 7, 1962. The murre was photographed and released in Baltimore Harbor (Brackbill, 1962). Also, in the District of Columbia, 5 specimens were found in the Washington market between Dec. 14, 1896 and Jan. 1, 1897 (Stewart & Robbins, 1958). Interestingly, this was during the same period in which the greatest murre wreck in eastern North American history was recorded (Tuck, 1961).

The status of the Thick-billed Murre in Maryland waters is probably similar as that suggested for the Razorbill. Of the two murre species,

the Thick-billed, whose breeding range is more northern, is the one most commonly identified at mid-Atlantic latitudes. Common Murres seem to have an affection for warmer waters, thus winter on the Newfoundland Grand Banks, where there is abundant food because of the diffused Gulf Stream which brushes the edge of the banks (Tuck, 1961). The Thick-billed Murres on the other hand are probably caught up in the Labrador Current which flows southward along the northwest Atlantic coast.

UNIDENTIFIED LARGE ALCID. Fourteen large alcids (either Razorbills or murres) were seen during the study period, but not satisfactorily identified--8 alone on Mar. 25 (RAR, *et al*).

DOVEKIE (*Plautus alle*). It certainly was not a "flight" year for this species, as only one individual was encountered: on Dec. 23, 10 miles E of Ocean City (RAR).

The status of the Dovekie in Maryland waters can best be described as eruptive, and it is the one alcid which is most often found wrecked in inland localities following severe northeast storms. "Thousands" were reported to John H. Buckalew, 10 to 15 miles off of Ocean City, during early January, 1949, while "hundreds" were being caught in mack-eral nets (Stewart & Robbins, 1958).

Corroborating observers cited:

BB --- Bill Blakeslee	NS --- Napier Shelton
PGD --- Paul G. DuMont	CRV --- Charles R. Vaughn
HM --- Harvey Mudd	H&HW--- Harold and Hal Wierenga
CSR --- Chandler S. Robbins	CW --- Claudia Wilds
RAR --- Richard A. Rowlett	mob.--- many observers

SUMMARY

Summarizing the preceding discussion, one conclusion is apparent; there is an incredible amount of information to be learned regarding the ecology affecting wintering sea birds in mid-Atlantic latitudes. This report has merely scratched the surface of an untapped source of knowledge. It is hoped that the reader will not label the author as overly presumptuous regarding the sketchy discussion of some ecological factors affecting sea bird dispersal, and the radical changes in status applied to certain birds based on no more than one sighting. The ocean is a mighty vast, open place, and a single person running but seven short transects out to sea no more than 38 miles is going to see a mighty low percentage of the birds actually there. I have attempted to conduct this preliminary survey as accurately as possible. When I have attempted to interpret my observations, I have found myself up against a wall of problems for which I had no means to supply a set of answers. Perhaps by posing many questions and uncertainties, this paper will inspire future expansion and exploration into the ways of the sea birds in what used to be regarded as the "uninteresting Atlantic."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a great deal of thanks to Ed Brex, Captain of the "TAURUS," and Orie Bunting, Captain of the "CAPT BUNTING," for being so obliging

and tolerant of my unending questions and allowing me as well as others to "ride along" at the reduced fares. It is difficult to acknowledge everyone who contributed to the success of the study of Maryland's wintering off-shore avifauna, but to those who offered the greatest in companionship, with keen observations and suggestions, I must acknowledge Paul G. DuMont, foremost, but also Bill Blakeslee, Harvey Mudd, Napier Shelton, Charles R. Vaughn, Hal Wierenga, and Claudia Wilds. Gratitude is extended to Fred R. Scott and P. William Smith for supplying records from New Jersey and Virginia, which allowed me to better analyze the extent of the alcid flight this winter. Also, very special thanks are extended to David Holmes, who in my estimation made the Feb. 3 charter trip the spectacular success it was for the 45 eager participants, with his valiant "chumming" efforts. Finally, appreciation is extended to Chandler S. Robbins for his suggestions and critical review of this manuscript.

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## A SALUTE TO ALICE S. KAESTNER

*Shirley H. Geddes*

Lake Roland is one of the best birding places in the Baltimore area, offering a diversity of lake, stream, swamp and upland. It was because of this that Alice Shields Kaestner took a walk there with the Mountain Club in 1944 and became aware of the world of birds. After that discovery there just seemed to be no better place to be. Alice made the acquaintance of others with a similar interest and thereby became a Charter Member of the Maryland Ornithological Society at its formation on February 23, 1945.



From 1944 until the present time Alice has birded the Lake Roland area regularly and in 1952 moved her home and family within a short distance of it. She was responsible for initiating weekday morning walks there in the spring, originally set up for mothers with school-age children. One has only to re-read her article, "Birds of Lake Roland" in the March 1967 issue of *Maryland Birdlife* to sense some of the feeling she has for birds. Two sentences from that article express so clearly her knowledge and ability to share it with others. "By all means, go down in the evening (to Lake Roland) from mid-May to mid-June to listen to the Veeries singing. It is a whisper song with an ethereal quality." And from another paragraph, "Do not stop birding regularly until after the third week of May so that you may see the Mourning Warbler sitting in a low bush, an Olive-sided Flycatcher high on a dead limb, or a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on the edge of the woods in a sapling about ten feet high." Alice personally has identified 169 species of birds at Lake Roland.

In our infant years Alice served as "Feeding Stations Chairman," writing a section in *Birdlife* entitled, "At the Feeding Shelf." This job evolved into Bird Records Chairman through the 1950's and since 1964 she has been INFORMATION AND BIRD EXCHANGE chairman for the Baltimore Chapter. This position includes writing up highlights of birds reported to her for the monthly Newsletter and answering telephone inquiries from the public. These calls have amounted to as many as fifty in one month. How appropriate that her initials are A.S.K! Her replies are always tactful and friendly as she tries to be of assistance and encouragement to everyone.

When the Baltimore Chapter began having public lectures in 1963, it was Alice who so capably secured nationally known speakers in addition to handling the sale of tickets. Her name appears constantly in the minutes of the Baltimore Chapter as she faithfully attended meetings serving as Program Chairman as well as a Director. She has been a State Trustee for ten consecutive years following her election in 1964.

She was one of the coordinators of the Breeding Bird Census at Lake Roland for the State society in 1947. And she has been a regular contributor to the "Season" reports of *Birdlife* for about twenty-five years, submitting not only her own observations, but relaying important sightings by other members. Her first feature article was published in the June 1960 issue, "The Year that the Evening Grosbeaks Came to Lakehurst." The September 1961 issue carried her "Further Pileated Observations in Baltimore Suburbs." And "Spring at Lake Roland - 1962" was in the June 1962 issue. "The Burner-Low Memorials" was published in December 1965, and "Birds of Lake Roland" appeared in the March 1967 issue. "In Memoriam - Malcolm F. Thomas" was in the September 1971 issue and "Accidental Poisoning of Pine Siskins at Feeder" in the June 1972 publication. She has been an active participant in the nest record program since 1951 and also a faithful counter on the May and Christmas counts.

When asked, Alice claims that the bird she most enjoys seeing is the Rose-breasted Grosbeak which she says "can be seen eating the Slippery Elm buds every spring at Lake Roland"; but most of her friends associate her with the Evening Grosbeaks. She was one of the first to have them at her feeder regularly. In her article in the June 1960 issue of *Maryland Birdlife* she states that this was the first time they visited her area daily. They stayed 131 days and consumed 350 pounds of sunflower seed. When they are in the vicinity, they still frequent her garden, swinging in the many coconut feeders which she has provided for them.

No one knows how many have joined the M.O.S. because of the helpful information she gave them, or how many have had their eyes opened to the birds on her spring walks. So it is with a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation that we thank her for all the years of inspiration, loyalty, and continuous interest she has given us and we wish her many more years of good health and happiness.

## NESTING SUCCESS OF CHESAPEAKE BAY OSPREYS IN 1973

Jan G. Reese

Chesapeake Bay Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) nesting studies I began in 1963 received financial assistance from MOS and its members in 1973. There are 3 areas of study; the primary area of interest is a delimited segment of tidewater Talbot County where all active nests are intensively studied throughout the reproductive season. Areas of comparable size are surveyed twice annually in both Queen Annes and Dorchester Counties as control checks against the Talbot area. For a description of areas, methods used for study, and data obtained see: Reese, J.G. 1968. Breeding Osprey survey of Queen Annes County, Maryland. *Maryland Bird-life* 24:91-93; Reese, J.G. 1970. Reproduction in a Chesapeake Bay Osprey population. *Auk* 87:747-759; and Reese, J.G. 1972. Osprey nesting success along the Choptank River, Maryland. *Chesapeake Science* 13:233-235. Comprehensive annual reports for individual areas of study are available from the author. The purpose of this note is to present a brief summary of productivity for the 3 areas in 1973.

In the Talbot County study area, I located 143 active nests, 114 of which were accessible for study (contents could be seen). In the accessible nests, 327 eggs were laid and 54 percent of these hatched. This is the best hatching rate observed during the study. I found 163 large young in 75 nests, for an average of 1.43 fledglings per active accessible nest. This productivity ratio far exceeds any recorded during the past decade and is above that estimated for population stability.

Cool weather during April and May, a lack of blue crabs, and a State ban on harvesting of soft shell clams are thought to be largely responsible for enhancing nest success. Cool weather and no crabs kept water sports and boating activities at a minimum, thus there was little disturbance during the incubation period. The soft shell clam ban permitted aquatic bottom communities to proliferate for the first time in years. This resulted in more fish than usual and better water visibility in clam harvest areas. Rainy weekends, lack of evening thunderstorms, and U.S. Coast Guard restraint also aided success.

In the Choptank River area surveyed since 1968, I found 32 active nests of which 28 were accessible for study. I found 40 large young in 17 accessible nests for an average of 1.43 fledglings per accessible nest. This productivity was the best ever recorded in this area.

In the Queen Annes County area, I located 25 active nests in the same area surveyed annually since 1966. Of this total, 20 were accessible for study. Although a fantastic 65 percent of the eggs hatched, only 43 percent of the eggs produced fledglings. The mortality rate of 34 percent of the chicks is unheard of in my Osprey experience. I found 23 large young in the accessible nests for an average of 1.15 fledglings per accessible nest. Productivity was greater than in any previous year of study, and for the first time was within the range of 0.95 to 1.30



considered necessary for population stability (Henny and Wight, *Auk* 86: 188-198).

Of the 22 permanent nest structures erected in 1972 and 1973 with MOS financing, 18 were utilized by nesting Ospreys in 1973. In the 18 nests, 26 young were fledged for an average of 1.44 fledglings per utilized structure. Although this productivity was not better than the population as a whole, no nestlings were lost from these nests and 6 of the 11 broods had 3 young each. Also, the local citizens have taken pride in these structures and respect them vehemently.

Box 298, St. Michaels 21663

## AN UNUSUAL CASE OF LEAD POISONING IN A WHISTLING SWAN

*Louis N. Locke and Larry T. Young*

Lead poisoning resulting from the ingestion of spent lead shotgun pellets has been recognized as a cause of waterfowl losses since 1894,<sup>1,3</sup> and in recent years, it has been increasingly recognized as a problem among upland game birds.<sup>4,5,6,7</sup> Another source of lead poisoning among waterfowl has been the ingestion of paint flakes and solder wastes in the waters adjoining European shipyards.<sup>2</sup> Recently, losses among Mute Swans (*Cygnus olor*) in Michigan were found to be the result of the ingestion of lead fishline sinkers by the swans (Pay, *pers. comm.*).

This report is to document the occurrence of lead poisoning in a native North American Whistling Swan (*Olor columbianus*) following the ingestion of a fishline sinker.

On February 29, 1972, a Maryland Wildlife Officer submitted an immature male Whistling Swan to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center for diagnostic examination. The swan had been found sick on the bank of Seneca Creek, near Essex, Maryland, and died during transit to the Patuxent Center, a distance of about 50 miles.

At autopsy, the swan was found to be extremely emaciated with shrunken pectorals (typical "hatchet-breast") and completely devoid of subcutaneous fat. The esophagus was impacted. The impaction was 150 mm long and 25 x 35 mm at the widest point, just anterior to the thoracic inlet. The proventriculus and gizzard were filled with green plant stems, and the gizzard lining was stained dark green. No lead shot were found in the gizzard, but a lead sinker (weighing 2.97 gms.), two copper swivels, and assorted fishhook remains were recovered. The small intestines were dilated, and the intestinal lumen was filled with watery, greenish-yellow material. The colon was distended, varying in diameter from 25 mm anteriorly to 40 mm posteriorly at the entrance into the cloaca. The heart was pale and flabby; the coronary fat was gone, and there was serous fluid in the pericardium. Microscopically, the majority of nuclei of the tubular epithelial cells of the proximal convoluted tubules of the kidney contained small (1x2-3x4 mm) acid-fast



intranuclear inclusion bodies, a pathological finding diagnostic of lead poisoning.

Chemical analysis revealed that the liver contained 40 ppm lead, the kidney contained 2440 ppm lead, while a clot of blood removed from the swan's heart contained 830 ppm lead (all on a wet weight basis). Analyses for lead were made by atomic absorption spectrophotometry at the Environmental Trace Substances Center, Columbia, Missouri. These extraordinarily high levels of lead probably reflect a very high level of continuing absorption of lead from the ingested lead sinker.

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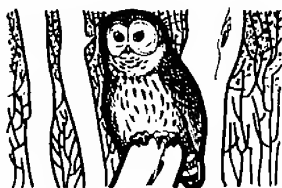
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## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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New members of MOS become part of us because of a mutual interest in birds and/or conservation. Most new members do not know about all of our activities; from time to time they learn about them. I am hopeful that we can initiate the policy of giving each new member a leaflet that will tell about our purpose and activities.

Before I share with you a letter from one of the recipients of our Helen Miller Scholarship, let me identify this activity for the benefit of those new members who may not know about it or its origin. Helen Burns Miller was a member of the Allegany County Bird Club who worked diligently with youth. She founded the Junior Bird Club and the Allegany County Bird Club Junior Nature and Conservation Camp. Following her untimely death, the Helen Miller Scholarship was created in 1959 as a memorial to her. It became an annual project of MOS under which a qualified teacher or youth worker received the fee for attendance at an Audubon Camp of his choice for a two-week period of study. By 1973 the project had become large enough to provide three scholarships, thanks to the Amateur Gardener's Club of Baltimore who gave to MOS the money for one of them. Here is the letter from one of the 1973 recipients.

"This letter is to tell you how greatly I enjoyed my two weeks, (August 12-24) at the Audubon Camp in Maine, which you made possible with the Helen Miller scholarship.

"It was an extremely well planned camp and we were very busy. Classes were held mornings and afternoons and there were evening programs; or a choice of two extra topics. It was difficult to decide because both sounded so tempting to me. Many aspects of ecology were presented, and almost in every case the out-of-doors was the classroom. Luckily my session was blessed with especially fine weather.

"The Maine Camp was a good choice for me because most of the plant and animal life we studied was exactly the same as here in Maryland--excepting the spruce woods and porcupines, of course.

"Attending the camp was an enriching experience far beyond my expectations. The information, techniques, and inspiration will be valuable aids as I continue my work with school children and others who may be interested in nature.

"Sincerely, Janet E. Ganter"

You may have read in the newspaper about the Canadian Government's policy in the past of granting permits to blueberry harvesters for mass slaughtering of Robins and of the government's apparent intent to issue the permits this year. Publicity in newspapers and conservation

periodicals aroused the ire of conservationists and bird lovers throughout the continent, and protests apparently poured into Canada. Mr. Carroll M. Pinckard, a member of the Baltimore Chapter, brought the matter to my attention; I turned it over to Col. W. G. Bodenstein, Chairman of our Conservation Committee. Col. Bodenstein did some research on the matter and prepared a letter to the Canadian Government in which the Society decried the proposal to again authorize the senseless slaughter. The letter suggested that permits be withheld while making studies of "alternative methods of protecting the blueberry crop, perhaps even granting some form of compensation to the farmer while methods are being developed." The permits were not issued.

I expected to tell you in this issue of *Birdlife* that we had added 110 acres to our Carey Run Sanctuary. Settlement was to be by Oct. 1. However, there has been an extension, I am advised by our lawyer in Oakland; extra time was required because the sellers had to provide additional information to the lawyer. Because our drive for funds has netted us already slightly more than \$10,000, we are having to borrow only \$20,000. Thanks to all who have contributed cash or pledges!

Mr. Charles Vaughn, President of the Wicomico Chapter, recently was host to two members of the British Broadcasting Company and two photographers from Washington whom they brought to Irish Grove Sanctuary for the purpose of making motion pictures.

I announce the appointment of a new committee, which I recommend become a standing committee--the Education Committee. Its purpose is to increase and coordinate the services provided by MOS to members and the public relating to education. Members of this committee are: Dr. Benjamin Poscover, Chairman; Dr. Roger Herriott; David Lee; Mrs. Marlene Letsch; Chandler Robbins; and Mrs. Shirley Spitler.

Barclay E. Tucker

#### BOOK REVIEW

Words for Birds: A Lexicon of North American Birds with Biographical Notes. Edward S. Gruson. 1972. N.Y. Times, Quadrangle Books. 305 pp. \$8.95.

This is a book for the etymological ornithologist--he who has a deeper interest in how our birds were named than can be found in *South Carolina Bird Life* (Sprunt and Chamberlain, 1949). Mr. Gruson gives the derivation of the generic and specific names of all U.S. (including Hawaiian) and Canadian birds. He gives brief biographical sketches of people for whom birds were named, but he does not tell by whom the birds were named. Although his Latin derivations appear to be authoritative, his many incorrect interpretations of common names reflect his lack of familiarity with the literature and with the birds themselves. For example, "Grasshopper [Sparrow] refers to the species' greater intake of insects than most sparrows." Anyone familiar with this bird knows it is named for its song. There are also geographical errors. Gruson states that the Hermit Warbler is "found most commonly in Texas"--a State in which this far western bird is purely accidental.

C.S.R.

## FIRST SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER IN MARYLAND

Carl W. Carlson

The "turf farm" in Montgomery County, Maryland, is about 20 miles northwest of Washington, D.C. It is a huge river-plain about 3 miles long and perhaps three-quarters of a mile wide devoted to raising turf for new housing. The Farm runs along the Potomac River, from which it is separated by the C&O Canal and the Towpath. Typically, the Farm has strips of roughly plowed ground, seeded and harrowed ground, seedling grass, well-established turf, and even some rough weed-grown turf. Thus, it offers the whole range of grassland habitat and appears to appeal to all "grassbirds," notably such shorebirds as Killdeer, Upland Plover, and Pectoral Sandpiper. The Farm is closed to the public and the working crews do not seem to disturb the birds, which we find unusually approachable.

On Aug. 26, 1973, Charles D. Cremeans and I checked the Turf Farm at about 11 a.m. (EDT). We had over 200 Pectoral Sandpipers and probably 300 Killdeer scattered over adjacent areas. We first examined these flocks from a distance, found 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and then moved to within 75 yards for closer viewing. After examining these birds, I began checking the 30-odd Pectorals immediately before us and discovered one bird with an eye-catching, bright red-brown cap. Its back was generally scaly and reddish brown; the underparts were pale buffy or white. It gave every appearance of being a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Erolia acuminata*). I alerted Mr. Cremeans who scanned the flock and promptly found the bird.

With the sun at our backs we viewed the bird for nearly 30 minutes at 50 to 75 yards, using 15X, 20X, and 30X scopes, catching it at all angles and comparing it to the many immediately adjacent Pectorals. Finally the flock worked its way far enough from us to make it necessary to follow, but as we detoured around a rain pond, the flock flew off unnoticed and we could not relocate our bird.

During our scrutiny of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, we jointly checked each mark with the Golden Field Guide (Robbins, et al., 1966) and agreed that the bird met every test. The primary mark was the bright red-brown pileum. Indeed, we were surprised to find it so bright and eye-catching a color. We repeatedly would look away and then pick the bird out of the Pectoral flock by binoculars, and even without, by looking for the red cap. By scope we could see plainly the small black streaks in the cap which looked much like black penstrokes. This special brightness appears to be the mark of an immature bird. Ridgway's detailed comments (p. 276) are as follows (italics supplied): "Adult in Summer--Pileum rufescent brown . . ." "Winter Plumage-- . . . pileum distinctly rufescent or cinnamonaceous . . ." "Young--Pileum *bright* rusty brown . . . sharply streaked with black . . ." Examination of the skins in the U.S. National Museum indicated that this species has a pileum of reddish-brown with a few short black streaks. In comparison,

the Pectoral Sandpiper's pileum is dark drab, on which appear a very few, very small vermiculations of reddish brown which are obscure even when the bird is in hand.

The superciliary stripe appeared unusually wide owing, I believe, to the paleness of the loreal and auricular areas. These consisted of relatively few pale dusky streaks on a whitish ground-color.

The bill was shorter and thinner than those of the Pectorals. Also, it lacked the heavy base and the yellow coloring of the Pectoral bill. Examination of the museum specimens confirmed this difference which can be easily seen in the field.

From the throat down, the breast was a pale buff, which color ran up around the nape where it was streaked with black, and extended down the center of the breast to a point slightly above the bend of the wing. On the sides of the breast, this color ran down along the folded primaries about to a point directly above the legs. This pale buff was "darkest" near the throat and on the nape, from which areas it paled out downward. There appeared to be a barely distinguishable cut-off between the buff and the white at a point directly beneath the throat; otherwise the buff simply paled into the pure white of the lower breast and belly.

In the buffy areas, there were very pale dusky streaks poorly defined, not unlike those on the breasts of immature Swamp Sparrows. These streaks were sharpest, darkest and most abundant on the nape, below which they rapidly declined in number and visibility. On the breast, these markings extended--at most--halfway from the white of the throat to the zone where the buff became white. Along the wing-edge I could not positively see any such markings; when the bird was in certain postures, streaking seemed visible, but I think these were feather-edges in shadow. From where the buff paled out to the under tail-coverts, the bird was pure white.

Although the bird was in belly-deep grass much of the time, we could see that its legs were green rather than yellow, and fairly dark in tone.

The mantle--back and wings--was definitely a foxy reddish brown in general appearance. The feathers typically were largely black with edgings of reddish-brown, but some had white edges. On the back were two white bars or lines similar to those of the Pectoral.

We were surprised to find that the bird was so markedly different from the Pectorals in general appearance, so much so that we could pick it out readily with or without binoculars. We felt that the bird was somehow more delicate in structure and more erect in posture. In particular, we felt that the head and neck posture and structure were definitely and visibly different. It should be noted that this general difference was not caused by the reddishness of the plumage nor the paleness of the breast. Perhaps 1 in every 20 Pectorals seemed equally foxy in general color, and had a breast cut-off that was extremely

difficult to see; this also was confirmed by the museum specimens. When such a bird moved past in side-view, the cut-off was literally not discernible, but when it turned toward the observer, the cut-off was easily seen.

When I reached home, I phoned other birders to obtain confirmations. I finally reached Jackson M. Abbott, who was able to go out at once. That evening he reported that he had promptly located "your red-headed bird" and, moreover, had found a second. Mr. Abbott became familiar with the species in Australia. Kevin Mullen also went out, but reached the Farm after all the birds had gone. The next morning I went to the Farm at sunrise and stayed until noon, but could not find the bird. Also, the Pectoral flock was down to about 20 birds, whereas the Sunday flock was about ten times as large.

On the basis of these observations, I submit that we saw a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, apparently in immature plumage. There has been no prior sighting in the Middle Atlantic States. In a letter to me, Chandler Robbins advised that the first Atlantic Coast specimen was taken in Florida on October 1, 1967 (Ogden, 1968). The second bird was obtained at Plymouth, Mass. on June 30, 1971 (Donahue, 1971; Finch, 1971). The third was seen by Paul Sykes in Florida in August, 1973. Our sighting is apparently the fourth Atlantic Coast record. Two additional reports were received in September of sightings in Massachusetts and Long Island, N.Y., but dates and details have not yet reached me.

For further discussion of field identification see Taylor (1969), and for the best picture I have seen of the fall immature see Plate 29 of Godfrey (1966).

I wish to thank Mrs. Roxie Laybourne who made it possible for me to examine the skins in the U.S. National Museum, and Chandler Robbins for his advice and assistance in the preparation of this report.

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## THE SEASON APRIL, MAY, JUNE, 1973

*Chandler S. Robbins*



The spring migration was frustrating in that almost without exception the big migratory waves occurred on weekdays when relatively few observers were afield. April brought a single warm period, stretching from the 16th through the 24th, culminating with 86° temperatures at Friendship Airport on the 23rd and 24th. Vegetation and migration that had been lagging during the first half of the month responded to the warm weather; by the 23rd and 24th several species such as Red-eyed Vireo, Kentucky Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were actually arriving ahead of schedule. Temperatures in May averaged 3° to 5° below normal, except for the last 4 days of the month. As a result, the migration tended to be a few days behind schedule and numerous late dates were obtained. Four consecutive days in the 80's at the end of the month, however, drew the migration to a sudden close and very few transients lingered into early June.

Rains were frequent, but not excessive. May 6 was the only day that month with no measurable precipitation anywhere in Maryland; and April and June had only 4 rain-free days apiece. There was neither serious flooding nor damaging wind. Perhaps the greatest weather-induced stress of the period occurred during the period May 23-28, when persistent rains seriously reduced the food supply available to swallows, cuckoos, and many of the other insectivorous species.

The earliest arrival dates are summarized by counties in Table 1, and the latest departure dates in Table 2. The counties are arranged from northwest to southeast. Thus, species that occur in equal abundance in all parts of the State can be expected to arrive first in the counties listed at the right, and to leave latest from the mountain counties at the left--provided observation effort is similar. Species that are much more common in western counties than eastern counties will not only be observed in more of the western counties, but will likely be detected at both earlier and later dates in the west than in the east. Examples are provided by many of the warblers: Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Mourning, and Wilson's. To provide a comparison of the 1973 spring migration with that of prior years, the median county arrival date for 1973 is given beside a 10-year median at the left side of the table. The most striking deviation from the norm is in the late departure dates of many of the songbirds, which is attributable to the cool weather that prevailed in the middle of May.

All contributions of dates for these two tables are gratefully acknowledged. As usual, we select for special mention those members who submitted the largest number of significant arrival and departure dates for each of the counties listed: Garrett County--Mrs. Frances Pope, C. S. Robbins; Allegheny--James Paulus, Kendrick Hodgdon, Elyse Harmon, Ann Smith, John Willetts, Dorothea Malec; Washington--Daniel Boone, Mrs. Alice Mallonee; Frederick--Dr. John W. Richards, Joe Schreiber;

Baltimore City and County--Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bohanan, Mrs. Alice Kaestner, C. Douglas Hackman, C. Haven Kolb, Joe Schreiber, Marjorie and Liza Nelson, Hervey Brackbill, Craig and Clark Jeschke, Etta Wedge, Mrs. Shirley Geddes, Mr. and Mrs. T.H.C. Slaughter; Howard--Mrs. Dorothy Rauth, Mrs. Rosamond Munro, Mrs. Joanne Solem, C. S. Robbins; Montgomery--Herbert Douglas, Dr. Robert L. Pyle, Nancy and Lucy MacClintock, Robert W. Warfield, Bob Whitcomb, Dr. Fred Evenden; Prince Georges--Herbert Douglas, Chandler Robbins, Paul and Danny Bystrak, Leonard Teuber, David Holmes; Anne Arundel--Hal and Prof. Harold Wierenga, Danny Bystrak, Prof. and Mrs. David Howard, Mrs. Ellen Gizzarelli, Mark Hoffman; Charles--Dr. George Wilmot, Leonard Teuber; Calvert--John H. Fales; Harford and Cecil--Dr. Edgar E. Folk III; Kent--Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mendinhall, Margery Plymire, Arlene Delario, John Hansen, James Gruber, John Wheatley, Floyd Parks; Caroline--Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Mrs. Ethel Engle, Mrs. Carol Scudder; Talbot--Jan Reese, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Armistead, Tom and Vicki Lehman, George Fenwick, Matt LaMotte, Don Meritt; Dorchester--Mr. and Mrs. Harry Armistead, Gordon and Holly Chaplin, Robert W. Smart, Richard A. Rowlett; Somerset--Mrs. Gladys H. Cole, Mr. and Mrs. C. Douglas Hackman, Dr. Ben Poscover; Worcester--Charles Vaughn, Harry Armistead, Samuel H. Dyke, J. M. Sheppard, P. G. DuMont, David Lee, Barbara Rothgaber.

Grebes, Petrels. Jim Paulus counted 175 Horned Grebes on Apr. 5 at the glass plant pond near Old Town; this is the highest one-day tally ever reported from Maryland's Ridge and Valley Section. Richard Rowlett broke the spring arrival date for the Wilson's Petrel when he saw 2 off Ocean City on May 12. Harry Armistead discovered a single Wilson's Petrel in Ocean City inlet before dawn on May 28.

Gannet and Cormorants. A lone immature Gannet sighted 100 yards off Assateague Island on May 28 (Armistead) established a late departure record for the State. Although the Double-crested Cormorant is regularly seen by the hundreds or even thousands along the Maryland coast, any count of over 50 from Chesapeake Bay is noteworthy. Armistead found 77 in southern Dorchester County on May 12 and 60 at Hoopers Island on May 20, establishing new high counts for the county. He also found summer stragglers as follows: 1 at Martin National Wildlife Refuge on Smith Island on June 4 and 3 at Barren Island on June 19. In Garrett County Fran Pope found a Double-crested Cormorant at Broadford Reservoir on Apr. 8.

Cattle Egrets. Cattle Egrets can now be taken for granted in April and May in all counties east of the Bay and in most of the Western Shore Coastal Plain counties as well. As the species becomes more abundant, spring arrival dates tend to get earlier and earlier. The westernmost report was from Washington County on May 5 (Daniel Boone). A flock of 14 in a field near Waldorf on June 2 were either late stragglers, or feeding birds from an undiscovered nesting colony (Leonard Teuber).

Other Herons and Ibis. Snowy Egrets wandered north to Prince Georges, Anne Arundel, and Kent Counties prior to the breeding season, and both the Little Blue Heron and Common Egret made it all the way west to Allegany and Garrett Counties (Table 1). Glossy Ibis are becoming

Table 1. Spring Arrival Dates, 1973

Species	Median 10-yr 1973	Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Chas	Calv	HaCe	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	Soar	Wore
Common Loon	-- 4/20	4/13	5/ 5	4/27	4/26	4/ 1	--	4/21	4/24	4/ 3	5/ 5	--	--	W	0	4/ 7	4/13	4/18	--
Pied-billed Grebe	-- 3/18	3/14	0	3/18	0	2/14	0	4/15	4/17	3/ 2	--	3/24	--	--	--	0	--	--	--
Double-cr. Cormorant	-- 4/ 8	4/ 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/ 4	5/ 5	0	0	0	5/ 5	4/ 7	5/ 5	4/18	4/ 7
Green Heron	4/23 4/18	4/29	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	4/28	4/ 7	4/17	4/ 5	4/15	4/ 2	4/18	5/ 5	4/18	4/10	4/15	4/20	4/15	--
Little Blue Heron	-- 5/ 5	5/ 6	5/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/10	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 7	5/ 5	4/18	4/15
Cattle Egret	4/25 4/17	0	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 1	5/ 5	0	0	4/ 5	5/ 5	4/15	5/ 3	4/22	4/16	4/15	4/13	4/17	4/ 6
Common Egret	-- 4/15	3/30	4/12	4/27	0	0	0	0	5/ 5	3/31	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	4/21	3/23	4/ 3	4/14	3/25	4/15
Snowy Egret	-- 4/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 5	4/10	0	0	0	4/30	0	4/23	3/26	3/25	4/ 7
American Bittern	-- --	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/15	--	4/16	0	0	0	--	0	0	4/20	4/15	--
Glossy Ibis	-- 4/24	0	0	0	5/ 5	4/ 3	4/ 7	0	0	4/29	5/ 5	0	0	0	6/10	5/20	4/20	4/14	4/ 7
Broad-winged Hawk	4/22 4/19	4/19	--	4/22	4/22	4/15	4/15	4/19	5/ 1	4/15	5/ 4	3/29	--	4/30	0	0	0	0	0
Semipalmated Plover	-- 5/ 5	5/17	5/28	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	0	5/ 5	5/ 2	0	0	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 7	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5
Black-bellied Plover	-- 5/ 5	0	0	0	0	5/ 5	0	0	0	5/ 9	0	0	0	5/25	0	0	4/28	5/ 5	5/ 5
Ruddy Turnstone	-- 5/ 9	5/23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 9	0	0	0	0	0	5/30	5/ 5	0	5/ 5
Spotted Sandpiper	4/30 4/30	3/28	5/ 3	5/ 1	5/ 5	4/24	4/30	4/14	4/24	4/29	4/28	4/20	4/12	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/30	--	--	5/ 5
Solitary Sandpiper	5/ 2 5/ 3	4/24	5/ 2	0	5/ 5	5/ 4	5/ 5	4/28	5/ 5	4/18	4/30	0	0	4/26	0	5/11	5/ 6	0	5/ 3
Willet	-- --	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/24	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/20	4/17	--
Pectoral Sandpiper	-- 4/14	0	0	0	0	0	3/21	4/14	5/ 5	4/ 2	0	0	0	5/ 2	0	0	4/ 1	4/14	--
Least Sandpiper	5/ 4 5/ 5	5/ 5	0	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/23	5/ 5	0	0	5/ 8	0	5/ 1	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/15
Dunlin	-- 5/10	5/17	5/25	0	0	0	0	5/11	0	5/ 9	0	0	0	0	0	5/19	5/ 5	4/19	4/15
Short-billed Dowitcher	-- 5/ 5	5/17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 7	0	0	0	0	0	4/ 6	5/ 5	4/19	5/ 5
Semipalmated Sandpiper	-- 5/ 5	--	5/25	0	5/12	0	4/29	0	--	4/28	0	0	0	0	--	5/10	5/ 5	4/19	5/ 5
Laughing Gull	4/16 4/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/ 8	--	4/24	--	4/17	4/ 3	4/ 7	4/13	4/14	4/ 7
Bonaparte's Gull	-- 4/ 3	3/25	0	0	0	4/14	0	4/ 7	4/ 4	3/ 9	0	0	0	4/ 5	0	4/ 2	3/10	--	--
Common Tern	-- 5/ 5	4/18	5/ 7	5/25	0	0	0	0	0	4/26	5/ 5	0	0	0	0	4/23	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5
Least Tern	-- 5/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/30	0	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	--	5/ 5	0	5/ 5
Caspian Tern	-- 4/28	0	4/27	0	0	4/22	0	0	0	4/ 8	0	0	5/ 3	0	0	4/28	5/ 5	0	5/ 5
Black Tern	-- --	5/ 3	0	0	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/28	0	5/12
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5/ 4 5/ 4	6/ 9	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 1	5/ 2	4/22	4/30	5/ 2	--	5/ 2	5/ 3	5/ 3	5/ 5	5/ 8	5/12	--	5/ 2
Black-billed Cuckoo	5/ 5 5/10	6/ 2	4/24	0	5/ 5	5/20	5/ 9	5/ 1	--	0	--	0	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	5/30	5/12	0	5/12
Chuck-will's-widow	5/ 2 5/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 5	--	--	0	0	5/ 5	4/20	4/20	--	5/ 5
Whip-poor-will	4/21 4/28	--	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	4/19	4/18	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/29	4/16	--	5/ 3	4/26	4/10	0	4/20	4/20	5/ 5
Common Nighthawk	5/ 5 5/ 6	5/18	5/ 7	5/19	--	5/ 5	5/13	5/ 2	--	5/ 1	0	5/ 9	0	5/ 9	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	0	5/ 5
Chimney Swift	4/15 4/15	5/ 1	4/21	4/16	4/11	4/ 5	4/29	4/20	4/ 5	4/ 3	4/14	4/22	--	4/17	--	4/ 4	4/28	4/19	4/ 7
Ruby-cr. Hummingbird	4/30 4/30	5/ 5	4/23	5/ 1	5/ 5	4/24	5/ 3	4/30	4/29	5/ 3	4/23	4/19	5/ 1	4/24	4/24	4/23	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 1
Red-headed Woodpecker	-- 5/ 5	3/26	3/24	0	5/ 5	4/30	4/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	0	0	5/ 5
Eastern Kingbird	4/26 4/29	5/ 4	4/16	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 2	4/19	4/21	4/22	4/29	4/29	4/30	--	5/ 1	5/ 5	4/23	4/17	5/ 5	4/ 7
Gt. Crested Flycatcher	4/28 5/ 3	6/ 2	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 2	5/ 3	5/ 2	5/ 2	5/ 5	5/ 1	--	5/ 3	5/ 2	5/ 1	5/ 5	--	4/30
Acadian Flycatcher	5/ 4 5/ 5	6/13	5/13	5/15	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 2	4/28	5/ 2	5/ 1	5/ 5	5/ 7	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	--	5/ 2
Least Flycatcher	-- 5/ 9	5/ 5	5/21	0	4/22	0	5/ 5	5/13	0	0	0	0	0	5/24	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Wood Pewee	5/ 4 5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/15	5/ 5	5/ 3	5/15	5/ 4	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 4	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 8	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5
Bank Swallow	-- 5/ 4	0	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	4/30	4/24	5/ 5	4/ 5	5/ 2	5/ 4	5/ 5	--	4/13	0	5/ 5
Rough-winged Swallow	4/14 4/22	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/10	4/29	4/23	4/30	4/15	4/12	4/15	--	4/16	--	4/22	4/14	--	--
Barn Swallow	4/ 8 4/ 7	4/13	5/ 5	4/ 5	4/ 4	4/10	4/ 9	4/ 7	3/30	3/29	4/22	4/ 3	--	4/ 5	4/ 1	4/ 3	4/13	4/14	4/ 7
Cliff Swallow	-- 5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 3	5/ 5	4/28	5/ 5	5/12	5/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	4/14	0	5/ 5
Blue Jay	4/27 4/22	--	--	--	--	4/22	4/29	4/19	4/30	4/20	--	4/22	--	--	--	5/ 1	--	--	--
House Wren	4/21 4/20	4/24	4/28	4/20	4/20	4/10	4/ 7	4/15	4/19	4/23	--	--	--	--	--	--	4/21	4/18	--
Long-billed Marsh Wren	-- 5/ 5	5/ 5	0	0	0	5/ 5	4/27	4/22	5/ 5	4/23	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	4/30	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/13	4/14	--
Catbird	4/27 4/28	5/ 1	5/ 2	4/28	4/28	4/24	4/22	4/14	4/22	4/25	5/ 3	4/26	--	4/30	5/ 5	4/29	5/ 5	4/21	--
Wood Thrush	4/25 4/23	5/ 1	4/23	5/ 2	4/22	4/23	4/26	4/26	4/20	4/23	--	4/23	--	4/30	4/22	4/29	4/20	--	--
Hermit Thrush	-- 4/10	--	--	4/14	4/23	4/ 7	4/ 6	4/15	4/13	4/ 1	--	4/ 9	--	--	3/24	4/13	--	--	--
Swainson's Thrush	5/ 6 5/ 7	5/ 3	5/ 5	5/19	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 3	5/ 9	5/ 3	0	5/10	0	5/24	0	0	5/12	0	5/12
Gray-cheeked Thrush	5/ 9 5/ 8	5/15	5/ 8	5/ 5	5/20	5/ 5	5/ 7	4/29	5/21	5/11	--	0	0	4/29	0	0	5/ 5	0	5/12
Veery	5/ 3 5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	4/20	5/ 1	4/29	5/ 4	5/ 1	0	5/11	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	--	5/12	0	5/ 5

	Median		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Chas	Calv	HaCe	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	Somr	Worc
	10-yr	1973																		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4/14	4/18	4/29	4/22	4/28	4/22	4/14	3/24	4/14	4/13	4/2	4/30	4/14	--	4/26	--	4/29	4/20	4/15	4/15
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4/12	4/16	4/19	4/21	--	--	4/7	4/7	4/11	4/17	4/16	--	4/18	--	--	--	--	--	--	4/15
Cedar Waxing	4/24	5/18	--	--	--	5/22	5/13	5/22	--	5/24	5/15	--	5/10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
White-eyed Vireo	4/26	4/29	5/3	5/17	5/15	5/2	4/29	4/26	4/26	4/16	4/17	4/29	4/23	5/2	4/30	--	4/29	4/20	4/18	4/18
Yellow-throated Vireo	4/28	4/30	6/13	5/2	5/28	5/2	4/29	4/30	4/24	4/20	4/17	4/30	4/23	--	--	--	0	4/20	--	4/18
Solitary Vireo	4/26	5/2	4/24	0	4/28	5/5	4/24	4/28	4/26	4/5	5/5	0	0	5/5	0	0	5/5	5/5	0	5/5
Red-eyed Vireo	4/28	4/30	5/5	5/2	5/5	5/2	5/1	4/30	4/25	4/24	4/23	4/30	4/25	--	4/26	4/29	5/1	4/28	--	4/22
Warbling Vireo	5/2	5/5	0	5/2	4/29	5/5	--	5/16	4/22	5/14	5/31	0	0	5/1	5/5	4/29	0	0	0	0
Black-&white Warbler	4/22	4/23	4/23	5/3	--	5/5	4/24	4/18	4/7	4/20	4/17	4/30	4/29	--	4/29	4/16	5/1	4/20	--	4/9
Prothonotary Warbler	4/26	5/1	0	5/3	5/5	5/5	4/24	5/5	4/21	4/20	5/1	4/30	5/11	5/1	4/30	5/5	5/5	4/20	--	4/19
Worm-eating Warbler	5/2	5/2	5/5	4/24	--	5/5	4/28	4/30	5/5	5/1	5/5	5/5	--	--	5/2	5/5	0	4/20	--	4/15
Golden-winged Warbler	5/4	5/3	5/3	4/29	--	0	0	0	5/5	5/1	5/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue-winged Warbler	5/3	5/3	0	5/3	5/2	5/5	5/2	5/1	4/26	5/2	5/3	5/5	0	5/5	5/5	5/5	0	0	0	4/22
Tennessee Warbler	5/1	5/5	--	5/20	--	5/5	5/2	5/5	5/5	5/4	4/27	0	5/15	0	5/3	0	0	0	0	0
Nashville Warbler	5/3	5/5	5/5	4/22	0	5/5	5/5	0	4/29	5/1	5/3	5/5	0	5/5	5/5	0	0	5/5	0	5/2
Parula Warbler	4/25	4/23	5/5	4/16	5/5	5/5	4/24	4/19	4/19	4/16	4/18	4/30	4/23	5/1	5/5	5/5	4/18	4/21	--	4/17
Yellow Warbler	4/27	4/30	4/29	5/1	4/23	4/30	4/15	5/2	4/28	4/21	4/26	5/5	4/24	4/28	4/30	5/5	5/1	5/5	5/4	4/26
Magnolia Warbler	5/4	5/5	--	5/5	--	5/5	5/5	4/28	5/3	5/7	5/10	5/10	5/11	0	5/24	0	5/1	5/5	5/11	5/11
Cape May Warbler	5/4	5/5	5/3	0	5/10	0	5/5	5/5	4/29	5/3	5/5	0	--	0	0	0	5/5	0	5/12	0
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	5/2	5/3	5/5	4/26	5/5	5/5	5/2	5/2	4/28	4/25	5/3	4/30	5/1	0	5/5	5/5	5/1	5/12	5/13	5/11
Myrtle Warbler	4/16	4/15	4/20	4/26	4/19	4/8	4/23	4/23	4/14	4/12	4/21	--	4/15	4/15	4/1	--	4/13	--	--	4/17
Black-thr. Green Warbler	5/2	5/4	5/5	5/5	--	5/5	4/29	4/30	5/3	5/3	5/4	0	5/10	0	0	0	5/13	0	4/18	5/12
Cerulean Warbler	5/3	5/5	5/5	5/3	--	5/7	5/5	5/5	4/28	4/30	5/5	5/5	0	--	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blackburnian Warbler	5/4	5/5	5/5	5/3	--	--	5/5	5/5	4/29	5/2	5/2	0	5/12	0	0	0	--	0	0	5/12
Yellow-throated Warbler	4/19	4/18	0	0	0	0	5/5	0	4/7	4/23	4/21	5/5	4/14	0	0	--	--	4/15	--	4/7
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/4	5/5	5/5	5/5	--	--	5/5	5/5	5/4	5/10	5/5	5/10	5/11	5/5	0	0	5/13	0	0	5/5
Bay-breasted Warbler	5/11	5/10	5/5	5/19	--	0	5/10	0	5/5	5/14	5/10	5/10	0	0	5/5	0	0	0	0	0
Blackpoll Warbler	5/6	5/5	--	5/5	5/27	5/13	5/2	5/16	5/4	5/3	5/5	5/10	5/5	0	5/5	0	5/5	5/5	5/11	5/11
Pine Warbler	--	3/24	5/5	4/20	3/24	0	--	0	4/23	3/15	--	3/24	3/20	0	--	3/18	3/10	3/26	3/25	3/14
Prairie Warbler	4/25	4/24	4/24	--	--	4/29	4/21	4/24	4/24	4/19	4/24	4/29	5/2	--	5/5	5/5	4/20	4/20	4/21	--
Palm Warbler	4/18	4/15	4/23	0	0	--	4/24	4/15	4/14	4/18	4/12	0	0	0	--	0	0	0	0	4/9
Ovenbird	4/27	4/30	5/3	5/1	5/15	5/5	4/23	4/21	5/4	4/19	4/23	4/30	4/18	5/5	4/29	5/5	5/1	4/13	4/19	4/15
Northern Waterthrush	5/2	5/5	5/5	5/5	0	0	5/1	5/5	4/22	4/30	5/3	0	5/13	0	5/24	5/5	0	5/12	0	5/12
Louisiana Waterthrush	4/14	4/7	5/5	--	3/31	4/20	4/16	3/4	4/7	3/29	4/6	4/28	4/1	--	--	--	--	--	--	4/7
Kentucky Warbler	5/3	5/4	5/3	--	5/19	5/5	5/5	5/2	5/4	4/23	4/30	4/30	5/5	5/1	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	--	4/22
Mourning Warbler	--	5/24	5/25	5/24	0	5/19	0	5/19	5/26	5/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yellowthroat	4/21	4/23	5/3	5/1	5/5	5/2	4/19	4/27	4/22	4/20	4/23	5/2	4/25	--	4/23	--	4/22	4/13	4/16	4/18
Yellow-breasted Chat	5/2	5/5	5/5	5/3	5/5	5/5	4/11	4/28	5/5	5/2	4/23	5/5	5/13	5/1	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/3	4/18
Hooded Warbler	4/30	5/2	--	5/5	--	5/7	4/24	5/5	5/4	4/24	4/28	4/30	4/23	5/5	5/7	0	0	0	--	4/20
Wilson's Warbler	5/8	5/5	5/5	0	0	0	5/8	5/5	5/5	5/2	5/5	0	0	5/5	5/5	0	0	0	0	0
Canada Warbler	5/6	5/5	--	--	--	--	5/3	5/5	5/3	5/2	5/5	0	5/11	0	5/5	0	0	5/12	0	0
American Redstart	4/29	5/4	5/5	5/5	--	5/2	4/23	5/1	4/21	4/20	5/5	4/30	4/25	5/5	5/7	5/5	5/5	5/5	--	4/18
Bobolink	5/6	5/5	5/5	5/13	0	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/2	5/5	0	0	5/3	5/10	0	5/5	0	5/12
Orchard Oriole	5/2	5/3	5/13	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	4/28	4/23	4/14	5/5	4/25	5/1	4/24	4/29	4/28	5/5	--	5/5
Baltimore Oriole	4/30	5/1	5/5	5/1	4/29	5/5	4/25	5/1	4/8	4/23	4/24	5/1	5/10	4/17	4/29	5/5	--	5/12	5/11	5/5
Scarlet Tanager	4/28	5/2	5/3	5/3	--	5/5	4/30	4/28	4/24	4/23	4/28	4/30	5/4	5/5	5/5	4/23	5/5	5/5	--	4/24
Summer Tanager	5/3	5/5	0	0	5/19	0	5/9	0	4/24	5/5	--	4/30	5/2	0	0	5/5	0	5/5	0	5/5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/4	5/4	5/2	0	5/4	5/5	4/25	5/5	4/24	5/2	5/3	5/5	4/24	5/3	5/5	5/5	5/4	5/12	--	5/1
Blue Grosbeak	4/30	5/5	0	0	5/25	0	4/25	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/3	0	4/29	5/5	5/5	5/5	--	5/5
Indigo Bunting	5/1	5/3	5/5	5/3	5/5	4/30	4/20	5/5	4/29	5/1	5/5	4/30	5/2	5/3	4/25	5/5	5/5	5/5	--	5/5
Grasshopper Sparrow	4/30	5/5	5/5	--	5/10	5/5	5/5	4/27	--	5/5	5/1	--	4/23	5/5	5/2	4/16	--	5/5	--	--
Sharp-tailed Sparrow	--	5/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/24	0	0	0	5/5	5/5	0	5/5	4/19	5/12
Seaside Sparrow	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/23	0	0	0	0	0	0	4/13	4/14	5/5
White-crowned Sparrow	5/4	5/5	5/5	4/27	5/5	5/5	5/4	5/5	5/5	0	5/9	0	0	0	5/5	5/5	5/1	0	0	0
Swamp Sparrow	--	4/17	5/3	4/17	--	--	--	4/18	4/14	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4/10	--	--	--

more and more widespread as spring vagrants in Maryland: 50 flying over Trappe in Talbot County on May 20 (Jan Reese) and singles or small flocks at Sandy Point (Harold and Hal Wierenga), Baltimore, Howard County (Mr. and Mrs. Walter Bohanan), and Frederick County. Two Yellow-crowned Night Herons sighted along the C & O Canal near Williamsport on May 7 (Don Cutchall, Ross and Mary Corderman, and Irene Greenefield) will bear further investigation, as the species has not been found nesting in the Ridge and Valley Section of Maryland.

Nesting Herons and Ibis. The nesting season was a good one for the herons. Jan Reese reported from Talbot County that Green Herons had "unbelievably good nesting success." Harry Armistead conducted a detailed census of the new Barren Island heronries, which he believes were first occupied in 1972; his June 19 nest count was as follows: Cattle Egret, 449; Glossy Ibis, 165; Snowy Egret, 155; Common Egret, 77; Little Blue, 75; Great Blue, 55; Black-crowned Night, 31; Green, 5; and Louisiana Heron, 1. Mr. Armistead has a separate nest record for each of the three islands, as well as records of the contents of a sampling of nests. Armistead also reported on the Smith Island heronries, June 4. Heavy understory there forced him to settle for conservative estimates rather than actual counts: Glossy Ibis, 165; Little Blue, 123; Louisiana, 108; Black-crowned Night, 100; Snowy, 65; Yellow-crowned Night, 58; Common Egret, 40; Cattle Egret, 40; Great Blue, 30; and Green Heron, 18. It would really be great to have counts like this from all the Maryland heronries! The South Point heronry below Ocean City was visited on May 5 by Richard Rowlett, who estimated 2,000 nests with eggs, and the following adult birds: Cattle Egret, 1,200; Snowy, 1,000; Glossy Ibis, 800; Little Blue, 450; Louisiana, 350; Common Egret, 150; and Black-crowned Night, 50.

Ducks. An estimate of more than 500 Surf Scoters (with over 1,000 Oldsquaws) at Poplar Island on Apr. 3 was unusual for this far up the Bay (Jan Reese). Good numbers of summering waterfowl were tallied at Deal Island Wildlife Management Area on June 13 by Armistead, who believes these totals were about two-thirds of the birds present: Mallard, 8 (2 nests); Black Duck, 200 (11 broods and 1 nest); Gadwall, 67 (1 brood, 2 nests); Pintail, 3 males, 1 female; Green-winged Teal, 1; Blue-winged Teal, 45 (2 broods). The great exodus of Green-winged Teal from Deal Island took place between May 6 (1,750 birds) and May 13 (none) (Rowlett). Late dates for divers included a male Common Goldeneye at Bellevue, May 18; and 2 Oldsquaws and 2 flying Surf Scoters at Cooks Point, May 22 (all by Armistead). A pair of Ruddy Ducks at Fairmount Wildlife Management Area on June 14 led Armistead to believe this species may nest in Somerset County, although a strong-flying Lesser Scaup at Fairmount on the same day is relegated to summer vagrant status.

Hawks. At Bellevue, which has not been known as a spring hawk observation spot, the Armisteads and Lehmans counted 3 Sharp-shins, 2 Red-tails, 5 Marsh Hawks, and 2 Sparrow Hawks migrating over the Armistead property on Apr. 7. Bald Eagle counts in Talbot County reached a maximum of 2 birds (Reese, several April, May, and June dates). Armistead's peak totals were 6 adults and 8 immatures at Blackwater Refuge on Apr. 13, and



his record-high of 6 adults and 10 immatures in Southern Dorchester County (including Blackwater) in May. An immature Golden Eagle was at Blackwater on the late date of Apr. 13 (Armistead). Marsh Hawks seen in June indicated possible nesting at Blackwater and Martin National Wildlife Refuges and Fairmount and Deal Island Wildlife Management Areas (Armistead).

Rails and Coots. This much neglected family of birds was pursued by Messrs. Armistead, Rowlett, and others with interesting results. On Apr. 18, Douglas Hackman and Ben Poscover heard a Yellow Rail calling for 15 minutes around 8:30 a.m. along the Rumbly Point Road about 150 yards south of Irish Grove Sanctuary. On May 5 in southern Dorchester County, Harry Armistead, Bob Smart, and Davis and Sally Finch heard 55 Virginia and 15 Black Rails. Between 10 and 11:30 p.m. on May 6, Richard Rowlett counted 55 Virginias, 45 Blacks, 9 Soras, and 8 Kings from the Elliott road; and on May 13 he heard 11 Kings, 10 Clappers, 30 Virginias, 2 Soras, and 4 Blacks at Deal Island W.M.A. Black Rails were still actively calling at Elliott on the night of June 22-23, when Rowlett and Hal Wierenga counted 22 birds between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. and saw 4 of them. A King Rail at Poplar Island on June 15 (Reese) was unusual. According to Armistead, Smith Island "crawls with Clappers." He counted 46 there on the night of June 4, establishing a new high count for Somerset County. The second State breeding record for American Coot was established on June 14 when Armistead found 9 birds, including 2 young, at Fairmount and Deal Island Wildlife Management Areas.

Shorebirds. An American Golden Plover, a real rarity in Maryland in spring, was observed at leisure in a plowed field at Blackwater Refuge on Apr. 1 (Bruce Beehler). Ruddy Turnstones were found at inland sites from May 9 (at Sandy Point State Park by Harold and Hal Wierenga and in Garrett County by Fran Pope) to May 30 (in Kent County by the Mendinhalls). A Whimbrel was found at Assateague National Seashore as early as April 18 (David Lee and Barbara Rothgaber), and the first inland record for the State was provided by Dr. John Richards, who spotted 23 Whimbrels in the rain on May 23 at Emmitsburg. On May 24, 2 flew north past Kent Point (Reese and M. LaMotte). As usual, Sandy Point provided the most shorebird sightings west of the Bay; of the 17 species identified there by the Wierengas during this period, the most unusual spring migrants were White-rumped Sandpiper and Western Sandpiper, both on May 22-25. A Short-billed Dowitcher seen near Robert Warfield's summer home at West Ocean City on June 16 is considered a summer vagrant. Rowlett's and Armistead's estimates of shorebirds in the big impoundments at Deal Island Wildlife Management Area in Somerset County are among the best ever reported in Maryland in spring away from the coast: On May 13 Rowlett estimated Semipalmated Plover, 2,500; Killdeer, 2; Black-belly, 250; Ruddy Turnstone, 35; Spotted, 12; Solitary, 3; Willet, 160; Greater Yellowlegs, 2,000; Lesser Yellowlegs, 700; Pectoral, 30; White-rumped, 5; Least, 24,000; Short-billed Dowitcher, 4,500; Long-billed Dowitcher, 1; Stilt Sandpiper, 7; Semipalmated, 10,000; and Western, 250; total, 17 species in 6 hours. On May 27 Armistead found Semipalmated Plover, 70; Black-belly, 65; Ruddy Turnstone, 35; Spotted Sandpiper, 6; Willet, 10; Greater Yellowlegs, 10; Lesser Yellowlegs, 2; Pectoral, 2; White-rump, 1; Least,

Table 2. Spring Departure Dates, 1973

Species	Median 10-yr 1973		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Chas	Calv	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	Somr	Worc
Common Loon	5/ 9	5/13	5/16	5/ 5	0	5/13	5/ 5	0	5/20	5/ 5	5/13	--	--	5/ 6	0	5/ 6	5/22	--	5/28
Horned Grebe	--	4/15	4/ 5	4/ 5	--	0	4/15	0	--	0	5/ 5	4/ 8	4/15	--	0	5/ 5	--	--	5/13
Double-cr. Cormorant	--	5/24	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/24	--	0	0	--	5/30	5/20	6/ 4	5/13
Whistling Swan	4/21	5/ 2	0	4/20	0	0	3/16	4/30	4/ 6	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/ 4	5/30	5/13	4/30	5/ 5	--	0
Canada Goose	4/30	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	4/15	5/ 5	4/22	4/12	--	3/27	5/ 5	3/14	5/ 5	5/10	5/ 5	5/ 5	--	5/ 5
Pintail	--	5/ 5	4/15	0	0	0	--	0	--	--	5/ 5	--	--	5/ 5	--	--	4/13	5/27	--
Green-winged Teal	--	5/ 5	4/ 8	0	0	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 7	--	4/18	5/ 5	4/30	4/ 9	0	5/20	5/ 5	5/ 6	--
American Widgeon	--	4/27	4/19	0	0	0	--	0	0	--	3/26	0	4/13	5/ 5	0	--	5/ 5	5/ 6	--
Shoveler	--	--	4/ 9	0	0	0	0	0	0	--	0	0	0	4/30	0	0	5/12	5/27	--
Ring-necked Duck	--	4/14	4/19	0	0	4/15	--	3/16	--	--	5/ 5	0	0	4/ 9	0	0	4/13	0	0
Canvasback	--	4/14	4/ 5	4/10	0	0	0	3/20	0	--	5/12	0	3/25	5/ 5	0	4/30	--	4/19	--
Lesser Scaup	--	5/ 2	5/ 5	0	0	0	4/10	5/15	0	--	0	0	3/15	4/30	0	4/30	5/ 5	4/14	--
Common Goldeneye	--	--	5/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/12	0	0	0	0	5/18	5/ 5	--	--
Bufflehead	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/10	5/ 5	5/ 8	5/ 5	0	4/15	5/ 5	0	4/30	--	0	--
Oldsquaw	--	4/10	4/ 8	4/10	0	0	3/ 8	0	0	0	4/10	0	0	0	0	5/30	5/22	0	--
Ruddy Duck	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/12	0	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	--	--
Common Merganser	--	4/ 1	5/ 5	0	0	0	4/ 1	3/ 4	4/14	--	0	0	0	3/30	3/29	0	4/13	0	0
American Coot	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 5	4/10	0	4/20	5/ 5	0	4/20	5/12	5/12	5/13
Semipalmated Plover	--	5/27	5/27	5/28	0	--	5/ 9	0	0	--	5/25	--	0	5/ 8	--	5/24	6/ 5	5/27	5/28
Black-bellied Plover	--	5/27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/24	0	0	5/30	0	5/24	5/27	6/ 4	5/28
Ruddy Turnstone	--	5/27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/25	0	0	5/30	0	0	5/ 5	5/27	5/28
Common Snipe	5/ 2	5/ 5	0	0	0	--	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/25	5/ 5	5/ 4	3/17	5/12	5/ 6	--
Spotted Sandpiper	--	5/28	5/27	--	--	5/15	6/ 3	5/28	5/19	5/18	5/31	5/28	5/ 3	5/30	--	5/ 7	--	6/ 1	5/28
Solitary Sandpiper	--	5/15	5/18	--	0	5/15	5/13	5/16	5/19	5/18	5/24	--	0	5/ 8	0	5/11	5/12	0	5/13
Greater Yellowlegs	--	5/ 5	0	0	0	5/12	5/ 5	4/29	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/23	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 6	6/15	6/ 4	5/28
Lesser Yellowlegs	--	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/12	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/27	5/27	5/12
Pectoral Sandpiper	--	5/16	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	0	0	0	5/ 5	0	0	5/27	5/27	5/28
Least Sandpiper	--	5/27	5/27	0	0	5/26	--	0	--	--	5/25	--	0	--	0	--	6/ 1	5/27	5/28
Dunlin	--	5/25	5/23	5/25	0	0	0	0	--	0	5/25	0	0	0	0	5/19	5/27	6/ 4	5/28
Short-billed Dowitcher	--	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/15	0	0	0	0	--	5/27	5/27	5/28
Semipalmated Sandpiper	--	5/26	5/27	5/25	0	--	0	5/16	0	--	5/25	0	0	0	--	5/24	6/ 1	6/13	5/28
Gt. Black-backed Gull	--	5/ 5	0	0	0	0	1/14	0	0	0	5/12	0	4/18	5/ 5	3/30	5/24	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/13
Ring-billed Gull	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	--	--	5/ 5	--	--	5/18	5/ 5	--	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/30	5/ 5	6/ 1	5/13
Bonaparte's Gull	--	4/17	4/17	0	0	0	4/14	0	--	--	5/ 8	0	0	4/ 5	0	4/15	--	5/ 5	5/ 5
Caspian Tern	--	--	0	--	0	0	5/ 5	0	0	0	5/12	0	0	0	0	--	5/ 5	0	5/12
Black Tern	--	--	5/23	0	0	5/28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/19	0	5/28
Black-billed Cuckoo	--	5/30	--	--	0	0	--	6/ 2	--	6/ 8	0	5/27	0	6/ 3	--	5/30	5/12	0	5/13
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4/24	5/ 5	--	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/21	--	--	5/ 7	5/ 5	4/ 1	5/ 5	--	--	--	--	--
Blue Jay	5/14	6/ 4	--	--	6/13	--	6/ 7	6/ 9	5/17	6/ 8	6/ 3	6/11	5/22	5/10	--	5/ 1	5/19	6/ 5	--
White-breasted Nuthatch	--	4/17	--	--	--	--	4/ 8	4/ 7	5/14	--	4/17	0	0	5/ 5	0	0	--	0	--
Red-breasted Nuthatch	--	5/ 5	5/17	4/30	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 7	5/17	5/13	5/ 5	0	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/ 5	5/12	0	5/12
Brown Creeper	4/22	4/16	5/ 5	5/ 5	4/14	--	5/ 5	4/16	5/21	5/ 5	4/17	4/14	4/14	4/15	--	4/ 9	--	--	--



	Median		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Chas	Calv	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	Somr	Worc
	10-yr	1973																	
Winter Wren	--	4/16	--	--	4/14	4/20	4/15	4/16	4/30	4/7	5/6	--	3/18	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hermit Thrush	4/28	5/5	--	5/5	4/14	5/5	5/5	4/28	5/14	5/9	4/28	5/5	4/23	--	--	4/13	--	5/5	5/5
Swainson's Thrush	5/24	5/19	5/28	5/29	5/19	5/15	5/30	5/19	6/3	6/1	5/19	0	5/13	5/28	0	0	5/12	0	5/12
Gray-cheeked Thrush	--	5/28	5/28	--	--	5/28	5/29	--	5/28	5/22	--	5/27	0	5/28	0	0	5/12	0	5/12
Veery	5/17	5/22	--	--	5/28	--	5/26	5/24	5/28	--	5/13	0	5/16	5/24	--	5/19	5/12	0	5/13
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4/11	4/14	--	--	4/14	--	4/7	4/15	4/23	4/7	4/15	4/14	4/14	4/8	4/9	4/14	--	--	--
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	5/2	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/7	5/14	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	--	5/5	5/5	--	5/5
Cedar Waxwing	--	5/28	6/17	--	6/20	5/22	5/26	6/6	5/28	--	5/10	--	5/27	5/29	0	0	5/12	0	0
Golden-winged Warbler	--	--	6/9	--	0	0	0	0	5/6	5/9	5/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blue-winged Warbler	--	5/10	--	0	6/7	5/5	5/5	5/17	5/26	5/17	5/10	5/5	0	5/5	5/5	0	0	0	5/13
Tennessee Warbler	--	5/25	5/28	5/25	5/28	--	--	5/19	5/22	5/25	5/12	5/27	5/24	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nashville Warbler	--	5/5	5/5	5/5	0	5/5	5/5	0	5/6	5/22	5/13	5/5	0	5/7	0	0	5/5	0	0
Parula Warbler	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5/15	--	--	--	--	--	--	5/13	5/12	5/12	--
Magnolia Warbler	5/19	5/26	6/9	5/25	5/28	--	5/28	--	5/28	5/30	5/13	0	5/15	5/29	0	--	5/5	5/11	5/13
Cape May Warbler	5/10	5/16	5/26	0	0	0	5/26	5/16	5/13	5/17	5/14	0	5/15	0	0	--	0	5/12	0
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	5/14	5/21	--	--	--	5/15	6/2	5/28	5/29	5/24	5/13	--	5/21	--	--	5/23	5/12	5/13	5/13
Myrtle Warbler	5/10	5/13	5/10	5/24	5/5	5/5	5/26	5/24	5/24	5/17	5/13	5/27	5/27	5/28	5/5	5/5	5/12	5/10	5/13
Black-thr. Green Warbler	5/11	5/19	--	--	5/19	--	--	5/5	5/19	5/25	5/13	0	5/27	0	0	5/29	5/13	0	5/13
Blackburnian Warbler	5/20	5/25	--	5/27	--	5/22	5/26	5/30	5/28	5/22	5/13	5/27	5/15	0	0	5/25	0	0	5/13
Chestnut-sided Warbler	5/13	5/26	--	--	5/28	--	5/26	5/31	5/29	5/21	5/13	5/27	5/15	0	0	5/13	0	0	--
Bay-breasted Warbler	--	5/28	5/28	5/27	5/28	0	5/30	5/28	5/28	5/22	5/13	0	0	--	0	0	0	0	5/13
Blackpoll Warbler	5/28	5/31	5/28	5/28	5/31	5/28	6/5	6/2	6/4	6/2	5/31	5/27	6/4	6/1	0	6/1	5/27	5/11	5/28
Palm Warbler	5/4	5/3	5/5	0	0	5/5	4/24	4/28	5/5	0	5/5	0	0	0	0	5/1	0	0	4/19
Ovenbird	--	5/25	--	--	--	--	5/28	--	5/25	--	5/24	5/26	--	5/24	--	--	--	--	--
Northern Waterthrush	5/17	5/25	5/27	--	0	0	5/25	--	5/20	5/25	5/15	0	5/13	5/24	--	0	5/27	0	5/28
Mourning Warbler	--	5/26	5/28	5/26	0	5/20	0	0	5/28	5/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilson's Warbler	--	5/26	5/26	5/27	0	5/27	5/26	--	5/20	5/22	5/22	5/27	0	--	0	0	0	0	5/28
Canada Warbler	5/20	5/28	--	5/27	5/28	5/27	6/4	5/30	5/30	6/2	5/31	5/27	--	5/29	0	0	5/27	0	5/28
American Redstart	5/27	5/29	--	5/29	5/29	--	6/3	5/21	6/7	--	6/3	--	6/2	5/30	--	5/23	5/27	5/10	5/28
Bobolink	5/16	5/26	--	0	0	5/26	5/15	5/27	5/27	5/27	5/12	5/23	0	5/14	5/10	0	5/27	0	5/28
Rusty Blackbird	--	5/5	5/5	0	0	0	--	--	5/5	5/5	4/16	5/5	4/20	5/5	--	--	4/20	5/5	5/5
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5/12	5/19	6/17	5/26	5/13	--	6/3	5/22	5/19	5/22	5/16	5/26	5/26	5/5	5/5	5/8	5/19	0	5/13
Evening Grosbeak	5/6	5/10	5/28	5/20	5/5	5/13	5/16	5/6	5/10	5/17	5/12	--	4/30	5/5	5/5	5/10	--	--	--
Purple Finch	5/3	5/5	--	6/3	5/5	5/5	5/8	5/5	5/12	5/5	5/10	4/29	4/4	5/5	--	4/13	5/12	--	5/5
House Finch	--	5/5	0	0	5/1	0	5/5	4/16	5/17	5/5	5/21	0	4/1	5/5	4/13	--	0	0	5/12
Pine Siskin	--	5/9	6/15	5/29	0	0	5/5	5/5	5/13	5/5	5/16	0	0	4/11	0	0	0	0	0
Red Crossbill	--	--	5/6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5/12	5/5	5/12
Savannah Sparrow	5/6	5/5	--	--	--	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/12	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/12	5/5	5/13
Slate-colored Junco	5/1	4/28	5/5	4/28	5/2	4/23	5/19	5/5	5/5	4/23	4/25	--	4/18	5/2	--	4/10	4/20	4/15	4/29
White-crowned Sparrow	5/13	5/6	5/27	5/5	5/16	5/5	5/5	5/15	--	0	5/16	0	0	5/5	5/7	5/5	0	0	0
White-throated Sparrow	5/14	5/15	5/22	5/31	5/15	5/7	5/22	6/27	5/26	5/18	5/13	5/6	5/16	5/6	5/16	5/5	5/12	5/9	5/13
Fox Sparrow	4/4	4/14	4/15	4/16	--	4/18	3/24	4/14	4/14	--	4/9	--	--	--	--	4/20	--	--	--
Swamp Sparrow	5/7	5/12	--	5/6	5/5	--	5/5	5/17	5/16	5/5	5/12	--	5/16	--	5/5	4/14	5/12	5/12	5/13

September 1973

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

121

500; Dunlin, 200; Short-billed Dowitcher, 45; Long-billed Dowitcher, 1; and Semipalmated Sandpiper, 700; total, 14 species. Other unusual reports from Armistead were: as many as 3 American Oystercatchers at Ewell on Smith Island, June 1-5, 2 Knots at Martin Refuge on Smith Island on June 2, and the fourth and earliest Maryland spring record of a Black-necked Stilt at Blackwater Refuge, Apr. 20 and Apr. 22. Another Black-necked Stilt, a fall-plumaged Ruff, and a female Wilson's Phalarope were at Deal Island on May 6 (Rowlett).

Gulls. Once again there was a good scattering of inland records of Bonaparte's Gulls from mid-March to mid-April, apparently going cross-country from Chesapeake Bay to the Great Lakes. Most of the records were along the Potomac, but 3 birds were seen at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center on Apr. 4 (Elwood Martin), and a few at Broadford Reservoir in Garrett County from Mar. 15 to Apr. 17 (Fran Pope). There was an adult Little Gull with 125 Bonaparte's in a wet field at Sandy Point on Apr. 2 (Prof. Harold Wierenga). The largest Herring Gull colony in the State is located at Easter Point on Smith Island. Armistead made a nest-by-nest tally there on June 2 and found that some young had already hatched in 51 (9.4%) of the 543 nests. At least 6 adult Great Black-backed Gulls were present, but Armistead was unable to confirm breeding there.

Terns and Skimmers. Very early Common and Black Terns for Garrett County were discovered at Broadford Reservoir on Apr. 18 and May 3, respectively (Mrs. Pope). Three Black Terns at Emmitsburg on May 28 were unusual for Frederick County (Dr. John W. Richards). Two Caspian Terns at Old Town on Apr. 27, compared directly with a Common Tern, provided the first Allegany County record (Jim Paulus). Armistead provided some good counts of nests in tern colonies in Somerset and Dorchester Counties: 83 Forster's nests and 79 Common Tern nests at Deal Island Wildlife Management Area on June 23, 107 Common Tern nests on West Troy Island at Martin Refuge on June 2, 15 pairs of Least Terns at Crocheron launching ramp on June 1, and 12 pairs at Rumbley on June 14. George Fenwick saw 2 Black Skimmers along the Miles River in Talbot County on May 19, and Armistead and Rowlett saw 1 at Deal Island, May 27 to June 13.

Owls, Hummingbirds. Hal Wierenga's departure dates for owls at Sandy Point were Apr. 15 for the Long-eared and Apr. 10 for the Short-eared. The heat wave of Apr. 23-24 brought with it a record number of early arrivals of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Apr. 23 in Allegany (Ken Hodgdon and others), Charles (George Wilmot), and Talbot (Reese) Counties, and Apr. 24 in Baltimore (Craig and Clark Jeschke), Kent (Mendinhalls), and Caroline (Mrs. Engle) Counties. There was an even earlier arrival on Apr. 19 in Calvert County (Fales).

Flycatchers and Swallows. The late-migrating species of flycatchers were hardly detected, except for those Least and Traill's Flycatchers that remained in Maryland to breed. The only Yellow-bellied reported was at Carey Run Sanctuary on May 26 (Robbins and Hackman), and the only Olive-sided was at Chevy Chase on May 28 (Dr. Robert L. Pyle). More Cliff Swallows than normal wandered east of Chesapeake Bay: an early bird at Blackwater Refuge on Apr. 14 (second County record--Rowlett),

2 at Blackwater on May 5 and May 27--the latter being a late migration record for the Eastern Shore (Armistead), 1 at Jenkins Pond, Berlin, on May 5 (Rowlett), and 1 off Taylors Island on May 22 (Chaplins and Armisteads). Four Cliff Swallows were seen repeatedly at a bridge 5 airline miles from Clipper Mill Bridge in northwestern Baltimore County, where this species has nested for several years (Haven Kolb).

Jays, Nuthatches. Blue Jays did not stage a spectacular migration, but flocks were still migrating northward in early June in 8 counties, with the last movement detected in the Hagerstown Valley on June 13 (Robbins). A color-banded White-breasted Nuthatch that wintered at Hervey Brackbill's Baltimore home was last seen on Apr. 8. Red-breasted Nuthatches were found as late as May 17 in Prince Georges and Garrett Counties; and one still present at Carey Run Sanctuary on May 28 was so late as to suggest possible nesting (Robbins).

Wrens, Thrushes. Armistead reported Short-billed Marsh Wrens as very scarce this spring. The only observation away from tidewater was at Sycamore Landing in Montgomery County on May 6 (Warfield). Dr. Pyle found thrushes "way up this year," with 52 banded at his Chevy Chase home, compared with an average of 22 in the three previous years. The Swainson's and Hermit were captured in the largest numbers.

Warblers. Herb Douglas found that warbler arrivals in Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties were 1.0 day late, compared with his average for the previous 10 years. According to Table 1, warbler arrivals on a State-wide basis averaged 0.5 day late compared with the 10-year medians. Observers who were afield regularly felt that overall numbers were up to par, although some species such as the Cape May and Black-throated Green seemed scarce, while the Black-throated Blue, Ovenbird, and Canada were mentioned as being above normal. Rowlett listed 60 Yellow-throated Warblers and 135 Ovenbirds in the Pocomoke Swamp below Shad Landing on May 5, and Armistead broke his high spring count of Canada Warblers at Blackwater with 6 individuals on May 27. April 7 brought early arrivals to Seneca: a Black-and-white Warbler by Martha Chestem and a Yellow-throated Warbler by Robert Warfield; and on Apr. 15 the first Swainson's was spotted in the Pocomoke Swamp (Rowlett). The only Orange-crowned Warbler identified was at Fulton on May 14 (Rosamond Munro). Most of the comments about warblers referred to late departure dates, such as Tennessee Warbler on May 28 in Washington County (Boone) and at Carey Run Sanctuary (Robbins); Cape May on May 26 at Baltimore (Bohanans) and Carey Run (2 females, Robbins and others); Black-throated Blue in Baltimore City on June 2 (Liza and Marjorie Nelson); Bay-breasted on May 30 in Baltimore County (Joe Schreiber) and June 2 in Montgomery County (Dr. Fred Evenden); Wilson's on May 27 in Charles County (Wilmot, Schell, and Teuber), Emmitsburg (Dr. Richards), and Allegany County (Dorothea Malec); Canada Warbler on June 2 at Oxon Hill (Douglas) and June 4 in Baltimore City (Bohanans); and American Redstart banded on June 7 at Chevy Chase (Dr. Pyle).

Grackles. On May 20 the Armisteads and Chaplins found 3 flightless young Boat-tailed Grackles on Barren Island near Honga, extending the confirmed breeding range of this species farther north in Chesapeake Bay.

Finches. Interest in finches centered on getting late departure dates for lingering vagrants. Attempts were quite successful, as follows: Evening Grosbeak, May 27 at Carey Run Sanctuary (Baltimore Chapter trip), and May 28 at Mountain Lake Park (Fran Pope); Purple Finch, June 3 in Allegany County (Dorothea Malec); House Finch, May 21 at Annapolis (Prof. and Mrs. David Howard); Pine Siskin, May 29 in Allegany County (Dorothea Malec); Red Crossbill, 13 on May 12 at Blackwater Refuge (Armistead), also some on May 12 along the Pocomoke River (George and Stuart Robbins, Cdr. Edward P. Wilson); and White-winged Crossbill, May 6 in Garrett County (Fran Pope). House Finches summered again at Ocean City (Rowlett); and after the last birds left the Pyles' feeder in Chevy Chase on May 17, a male returned on May 30, suggesting the possibility that a pair might be nesting nearby.

Sparrows. Several people found both Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows to be scarce this spring. Rowlett found a concentration of 26 Henslow's north of the Elliott Island marsh on Apr. 14, but a week later only 1 remained. During the same week, however, Seaside Sparrows jumped from 0 to 70 along the Elliott Island Road. Other Seaside Sparrow arrival dates were Apr. 13 in Southern Dorchester County (Armistead), Apr. 17 at Irish Grove Sanctuary (Hackman), and Apr. 23 at Sandy Point (Hal Wierenga). There were several very late White-throated Sparrows this spring: 1 banded on May 26 at Chevy Chase (Pyles), 1 seen on May 31 in Allegany County (Dorothea Malec), and 1 singing on June 27 in the Middle Patuxent floodplain at Columbia (Robbins). Fran Pope banded a late Lincoln's Sparrow at Mountain Lake Park on May 25, and a singing bird entertained the Fletchers, Lee, Robbins, and others at Carey Run Sanctuary, May 26-28.

U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Laurel

## M.O.S. ADULT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A new program in leadership training has been developed during the past year, and it will be available (free) to M.O.S. members for the first time this spring. It is hoped that this program will allow participants to become better planners and leaders of outdoor activities. In turn, local M.O.S. chapters should gain from this program in that they will have more members with good leadership skills. The program promises to be both fun and educational.

Three seminars will be repeated in each of three geographic locations--Hagerstown, Baltimore, and Denton. In addition, three field trips are planned. These field trips will not only be a good opportunity for participants to acquire some in-depth knowledge of the natural history of selected localities, but will demonstrate many different methods of outdoor leadership.

Persons attending all three seminars and two or more of the field trips will receive a certificate that signifies their participation in the course.

The seminars will be led by the three members of the Committee on Leadership Training (now part of the M.O.S. Education Committee): Ben Poscover, Chairman; Chan Robbins, and David Lee. The titles of these seminars and an idea of the topics to be discussed are as follows:

Adult Planning - to include annual program planning, field trip planning, publicity, extension services, etc. Leader: Chan Robbins

Junior Planning - to include planning for junior nature clubs, nature camps, and activities. Leader: Ben Poscover

Outdoor Education - to include where and what to teach, urban outdoor education techniques, photography as a tool in outdoor education, etc. Leader: David Lee

The field trips will include:

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Dorchester Co. for winter birds, marsh ecology, etc., March 30

Rock Run Sanctuary, Harford Co., for spring birds, amphibians, spring wild flowers, and river floodplain ecology, April 27

Carey Run Sanctuary, Garrett Co. for ecology of boreal and Appalachian communities, studies of beaver ponds, May 25

Many people with in-depth knowledge of various aspects of these areas will conduct different phases of the field trips. This should give M.O.S. members a considerable variety of knowledge as well as a variety of leadership techniques. The schedule for the seminars is as follows:

Seminar	Denton (Eastern Area)	Baltimore (Central Area)	Hagerstown (Western Area)
I	Adult Planning March 12	Junior Planning March 14	Outdoor Education March 21
II	Outdoor Education April 9	Adult Planning April 11	Junior Planning April 18
III	Junior Planning May 7	Outdoor Education May 7	Adult Planning May 16

If you are interested in this program you are urged to contact the person in your area to register for the program. March 5 is the absolute deadline for registration, but early registration is recommended in order to help the committee in final preparations.

Contact people for each area are as follows:

Hagerstown Mrs. Marlin H. Thumond (733-1338), 147 Donnybrook Drive,  
Hagerstown 21740

Baltimore Mrs. Marlene Letsch (668-9362), 8627 Rock Oak Road,  
Baltimore 21234

Denton Mrs. A. J. Fletcher (479-1529), Route 1, Box 201,  
Denton 21629

*Education Committee*



## PRESERVING NATURAL AREAS ON SCHOOL SITES

*Dorothy Clark*

After much effort, frustration and prayer, I think I have succeeded in having the Baltimore County Board of Education preserve a natural (undisturbed) area at the Pine Grove Junior High School. I am especially interested in this school because it is almost across the road from my home and I know many birds nest there along the small stream.

Let me start at the beginning. Soon after I became interested in the M.O.S., I heard Mr. Charles E. Mohr (who had been the director of the National Audubon Society Center at Greenwich, Connecticut) speak at Cylburn.



Photos of Natural Area by the Author



He pointed out that natural areas on school grounds could play an important role in the education of children. Even an area large enough for only a small pond in which several ducks make their home is not insignificant and might serve to keep some children interested who might otherwise become school drop-outs.

I was intrigued by the idea. I had been helping with the school walks at Cylburn and had seen many bus loads of children come to visit the trails and museum. I couldn't figure out why some of the land at their own schools could not be used for outdoor study--in my naivety I was sure no one had ever thought of this before, for if they had, we would certainly have many "outdoor classrooms" at schools. In 1967 I heard that a new school was going to be built near me in 1972. I talked to various people about what I had by this time begun to refer to as "my project." Everyone agreed it sounded fine, but no one knew what I could do to make it become a reality. When I talked to people in the Science Department of the Board of Education my eyes really opened. These people knew all about this. In fact, I was shown a copy of a survey that had been made that showed how different kinds of outdoor study areas could be developed at various schools depending on the physical characteristics of the school sites. However, for certain reasons, such as more "pressing and urgent needs," lack of money, and know-how, natural areas had not been preserved and properly utilized. There were other factors involved. I discovered that relatively few teachers had received training in how to teach in natural areas; I doubt such training is readily available. Also land is at a premium and the Board of Education and the Board of Recreation and Parks cooperate in developing school sites. Owing to the great emphasis on sports today, much of the school site acreage is occupied by tennis courts, ball diamonds, etc.

The Science Department people told me that school sites were actually planned and laid out by the Site Development Department. This department took into consideration suggestions of the various educational departments. Although various memos about preserving natural areas had been sent by the Science Department to the Site Development Department, it seemed they had not been effective.

Accordingly, I wrote a long letter to the Site Development Department explaining in great detail why natural areas on school sites were important and urging them to include such areas in their planning. (I had also written a similar letter to the Forum in the Evening Sun.) I received in return a very courteous letter thanking me for my interest and saying they would do their best to include such an area on the school site at the Pine Grove Junior High School. I was told I would be contacted when the actual plans for the school site were drawn up so I could attend the meetings and perhaps make some suggestions. However, I was never contacted for this purpose.

In the spring of 1972 when the bulldozers arrived at the site, I was greatly distressed. I realized all the plans had been made and the actual grounds work was beginning. I was fortunate enough to be allowed to study the plat belonging to the construction foreman. I found two

areas marked "Woods." However, I knew that at one of these areas only the larger trees were to be spared and grass seed was to be planted. Rather than woods I would have referred to this as a "lawn area." I quickly looked at the section where the natural area was supposed to be and saw that that was designated in the same manner--as "Woods!" I checked with the inspector. He is the man who actually works on the site and from the plat directs the construction men. One of his jobs is to mark which trees will be cut down. He said he was not familiar with any natural area. From this I had learned a very important fact: that to the county the terms "natural area" and "woods" meant totally different things than they meant to me. To be sure there would be no misunderstanding, the term UNDISTURBED AREA was always to be used.



Finally when the inspector checked back with the supervisor of site development, the inspector found out the "undisturbed area" had been omitted from the plat by mistake and the supervisor had neglected to pass this information on to the inspector! However, the supervisor then informed the inspector properly. Only when the last bulldozer and chain saw had left and the undisturbed area still remained did I heave a sigh of relief and say a little prayer of thanksgiving.

Later when I thanked the supervisor he told me he was not happy having undisturbed areas as a rule. He felt they were harder to maintain than "woods" (lawns). People were prone (he felt) to use such places as dumps, and sometimes undesirable incidents took place. However, he did admit the importance of "green" areas especially in these days.

It would seem that how much undisturbed area is preserved on school sites is mainly determined by the feelings of the supervisor of site development. I was told that if I, as an interested resident of the community, had not expressed my wishes about an undisturbed area on that school site, he would probably have treated that area differently and it no doubt would have become another lawn and the stream, at best, would probably have been made to run on a concrete bed.

Although the undisturbed area has been allowed to remain, a very important part of this project has yet to be accomplished. The area must be prepared for proper utilization. If this is not done within a reasonable time, I fear the county will clear it out. It is important that the teachers and students at the school feel that it is really theirs. In order to do this, they should have as much to do with its "development" as possible. It is hoped that other groups in the community will also lend a hand. I have already contacted a lady active in the PTA in one of the feeder elementary schools. She is interested in seeing that the PTA helps in making a nature trail through the area. The science supervisor is planning to assign a man who is oriented to outdoor education to oversee the school's science program.

Last spring I became Ecology Chairman of the Baltimore County PTA Council. I hope that in the near future the council will be instrumental in seeing that Baltimore County establishes the policy of creating an undisturbed area at every new school wherever and however it is possible.

So, MOS'ers if you or any of your friends hear that a new school is being planned in your community, and you want to see that an undisturbed area is saved, please act--promptly and persistently. Contact the supervisor of site development of the County Board of Education immediately. Hopefully you will be saved much time and effort by taking advantage of what I have learned in my experience. Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information. (Phone 665-3532)

2607 Proctor Lane, Baltimore 21234

#### ERRATA

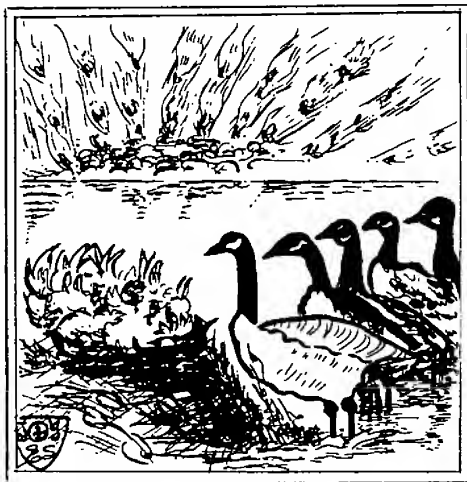
In the Pectoral Sandpiper paper by Mudd and Mudd in the June 1973 issue (*Md. Birdlife* 29: 52-53), several errors in citing Christmas Count reports from other states occurred in the editorial process. The 1969 Texas report should be replaced by "Arizona Phoenix 6"; and 3 records should be added for 1972: "Florida Lakeland 1, Texas San Antonio \*, and Arkansas Lonoke 1," for a total of 15 sightings of at least 35 birds in 5 states in Table 1. The second highest Christmas Count report was 9 birds at College Station, Tex. in 1972.

## GOOSE TALK?

*Eloise Shaw*

On Friday, December 31, 1971, my husband and I took a birding trip to Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. Then we drove to Remington Farms near Chestertown, to watch the "old year set" as the geese and ducks landed on the large pond at sunset time. The day was a bit cloudy as we watched Pintails paddling about and the many geese.

My husband noticed 16 Canada Geese standing quietly in a straight line from the roadbank out into the water. They seemed to be pointing. Then we saw it--a fallen dead Canada Goose at the end of their pointing line. They stood that way for the two and one-half hours we watched.



We turned the car around and started slowly back. Several blue-green peacocks, some gray and white ones, and a pure white one captured our attention until an explosion of four loud shots from blinds in the cornfield by our side startled us. A retriever carried two objects back to the four men. Soon this episode was repeated when other birds circled to come in.

From a pale turquoise patch of sky bright rose-pink shafts of sun glow gradually flared out across the heavens in a feathery wispy peacock design. Still the nagging question haunted us: Why the line of birds? Was this "bird talk"? Was it protest? Grief? A commentary? Could it be that they wished to point to danger, making themselves a symbol of warning to birds flying in?

It seemed to me that only about one-fifth the usual numbers of ducks and geese were there at that time. Was their mute testimony enough of a warning?

3502 Dundee Drive, Chevy Chase

## STATEWIDE "RARE BIRD ALERT" NETWORK PROPOSED

*Dickson J. Preston*

How often have you heard a report--too late to do anything about it--that a rare bird has been sighted in the Maryland region but that "it's undoubtedly gone by now"? Or read in *Maryland Birdlife*, months after the event, that Great Cormorants were observed in St. Marys County, Northern Phalaropes in Talbot, a White Pelican at Blackwater?

If you had known in time, perhaps you'd have jumped into your car and driven to the area in hopes of adding a life bird to your list or at least of sharing in a very unusual birding experience. But no statewide network exists for alerting MOS members promptly to such opportunities. In the opinion of many of us, there should be one.

Some MOS chapters do have local alerting systems through which their own members can learn when and where unusual sightings are made. Most chapters do not. And there is no present method by which members of one chapter can be routinely informed of what members of another chapter have observed.

The local systems vary greatly in form. Some are little more than "word-of-mouth" exchanges by which a member endeavors to let others know when he hears of something in which he thinks they would be interested. Baltimore has a more formal Bird Exchange headed by Mrs. Alice Kaestner (377-8990). In the Washington area, the Audubon Naturalist Society has a "Voice of the Naturalist" number (301-652-3295). On it a recording, which is changed weekly, gives news of bird reports and Audubon activities.

A simple alert system set up in the Autumn of 1971 by the Talbot chapter might serve as a model for others, and perhaps establish the basis on which a statewide network could be formed. Mrs. Edward O. Hulburt (822-0996) has agreed to serve as clearing agent for information to Talbot members. She keeps a list of those who have expressed interest in being notified of unusual sightings in or near Talbot County. Anyone having such a report is asked to telephone her, and she in turn telephones the members on her list. Each member, if he wishes, also can give the clearing agent a short list of specific species which he especially hopes to see. Mrs. Hulburt's name and number also have been given to experienced MOS birders outside Talbot County in hopes they will call when a real rarity is reported, especially on the Eastern Shore.

If every chapter had such a clearing agent for its own members, MOS would be well on its way to the badly needed statewide network. A dozen or so people, by keeping each other informed, could keep the entire state membership aware of what was going on throughout Maryland. (Except for really remarkable sightings, it is doubtful if expensive long distance telephone calls would prove necessary; post card reports would delay the information only a day or two.)

Not every MOS member could or would take advantage of the information made available. But I believe enough would do so to make a state-wide "Rare Bird Alert" network well worthwhile.

RD 5, Box 607, Easton

## PREDATION BY A BARN OWL ON A SPARROW HAWK

David S. Lee and Barbara B. Rothgaber

Systematic collection of the pellets of Irish Grove Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) has thus far revealed little seasonal variation in their diet (see Lee, et al., *Maryland Birdlife* 28 (1): 27-28, March 1972). However, a sample of food items collected from the Irish Grove Sanctuary of the Maryland Ornithological Society (near Marion, Somerset Co., Maryland) on Oct. 21, 1972 revealed the following:

Meadow Voles ( <i>Microtus</i> )	113
Mice ( <i>Peromyscus</i> )	9
Yellow-shafted Flicker ( <i>Colaptes auratus</i> )	1
Sparrow Hawk ( <i>Falco sparverius</i> )	1
Unidentified warbler	<u>1</u>
Total food items	125

To the best of our knowledge this is the first reported case of a Barn Owl preying on a hawk.

Dept. of Mammalogy, Natural History Society of Maryland, Baltimore

### COMING EVENTS

- Nov. 1 FREDERICK Monthly Meeting. National Parks in Africa. R. Russell.  
 2 ANNE ARUNDEL Monthly Meeting. Anne Arundel Co. Library, 8 p.m.  
 2 HARBORD Dinner Meeting. Churchville Presbyterian Church, 6:15.  
 3 HARBORD Trip to Susquehanna State Park. Phone 939-3146.  
 3 BALTIMORE Junior Science Talk. Endangered Wildlife by Dr. G. Gee.  
 3-4 MONTGOMERY Trip to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. Meet N. Lookout 9:30.  
 4 BALTIMORE Trip to South Mountain for hawk migration. 9 a.m. there.  
 4 ALLEGANY Trip to Shawnee Park, Pa. Meet Super Shoes, Rt. 36, 8 a.m.  
 6 BALTIMORE Lecture, Where Life Begins by Lawrence Bruns. Cylburn, 8.  
 7 KENT Monthly Meeting. One Day at Teton Marsh & Eagle film.  
 9 TALBOT Audubon Film, Twentieth Century Wilderness, Tom Sterling.  
 9-11 TALBOT Waterfowl Festival, Tidewater Inn, Easton. \$1.50.  
 10 BALTIMORE Trip to Blackwater and Elliott Island. Douglas Hackman.  
 10 FREDERICK Trip to Reich's Ford Rd. and Lake Linganore. 7:30 a.m.  
 10 WASHINGTON Trip to South Mountain for hawk migration. Mrs. G. Beck.  
 10-11 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Irish Grove Sanctuary. P. Flory and H. Ford.  
 11 MONTGOMERY Trip to Hughes Hollow. Meet Potomac Shop. Center, 7:30  
 15 MONTGOMERY Monthly Meeting. Identification by Silhouette. Robbins.  
 16 BALTIMORE Audubon Film, Twentieth Century Wilderness, T. Sterling.  
 Dumbarton Jr. High, 7000 York Rd., 8 p.m. \$1.50.  
 16 ALLEGANY Annual Banquet. Dr. Roy Clarkson. ACC Lounge, 7 p.m.  
 16 CAROLINE Monthly Meeting. Our Bird-man Answers Questions.  
 Public Library, Denton, 7:30 p.m.



- Nov. 17 PATUXENT Trip to Fort Meade. Montgomery at 9th, Laurel, 8 a.m.  
 17 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Bird Identification, Mrs. Barbara Rothgaber. Cylburn Mansion, 10 a.m.  
 17 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Blackwater Refuge. Meet Anglers Inn, US 50, service road east of Rt. 2, 7:30 a.m.  
 18 BALTIMORE Trip to Perry Point & Rock Run Sanctuary. Meet at MacDonalds on US 40 east at Rt. 24, 8 a.m. Lunch optional.  
 21 TALBOT Monthly Meeting. Christ Church Parish House, Easton, 8.  
 24 WICOMICO Trip to Chincoteague Refuge. East Main A&P, 7:30 a.m.  
 25 WASHINGTON C&O Canal at Taylors Landing. Meet Doub School, 1:30.  
 25 FREDERICK Trip to Baker Park & Braddock. Park band shell, 2 p.m.  
 26 WICOMICO Monthly Meeting. Bird Population Changes from Christmas Count Data. Asbury Methodist Church, 8 p.m.  
 27 WASHINGTON Monthly Meeting. Film, Colonial Naturalist. Emma K. Doub School, Hagerstown, 7:30 p.m.  
 27 PATUXENT Monthly Meeting. Birds of the Southwest Pacific by Dr. Cameron Kepler. St. Philips Parish House, Laurel, 7:45.  
 29 BALTIMORE Class on Winter Buds and Twigs by Gordon Filbey. Cylburn, 10 a.m.
- Dec. 1 PATUXENT Trip to Gude's Nursery. Meet Montgomery at 9th, 8 a.m.  
 1 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Sandy Point. Meet Anglers, US 50, 8 a.m.  
 1 BALTIMORE Junior Science Talk. Birds of Prey by Dr. Fraser Ward, Cylburn Mansion, 10 a.m.  
 2 BALTIMORE Trip to Sandy Point State Park & Kent Island. Meet outside Sandy Point toll gate, 8 a.m. Prof. Wierenga.  
 5 KENT Monthly Meeting. 7:30 p.m.  
 6 FREDERICK Annual Dinner. Highlights of Everglades Nat'l Park by Saul Shiffman. Jefferson Community Hall, 6 p.m.  
 7 ANNE ARUNDEL Monthly Meeting. Birds in Colombia by Dr. Donald Messersmith. Anne Arundel County Library, 8 p.m.  
 8 HARFORD Trip to Perry Point. Phone John Wortman, 939-3146.  
 8 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Point Lookout & St. Georges Island. Meet Riva Rd. entrance to Parole Plaza, Annapolis, 7:30.  
 8-10 BALTIMORE Trip to Nags Head, N.C. T.H.C. Slaughter, 825-8354.  
 9 BALTIMORE Trip to Bombay Hook Refuge & Little Creek, Del. Meet Refuge headquarters, 9:30 a.m. A.M.Plant, 433-7421.  
 11 WASHINGTON Program, Christmas Sky. Planetarium, Board of Education, Commonwealth Ave., Hagerstown. 7 p.m.  
 15 BALTIMORE Junior Program. Decorating Birds' Christmas Tree and Wildlife Film, Cylburn Mansion, 10 a.m.  
 20 MONTGOMERY Monthly Meeting. East of the Mountains by Edward Schell. Perpetual Bldg., 7401 Wis. Ave., Bethesda, 8.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT SCHEDULE

- Dec. 15 Denton. A. J. Fletcher, Rt. 1, Box 201, Denton 21639 (479-1529)  
 15 Catocin Mountain. Dr. John W. Richards, Emmitsb'g (447-6243)  
 16 Seneca, Md.-Va.  
 16 Garrett County. Mrs. Wm. Pope (334-4908), D. Bystrak (674-2965)  
 16 Salisbury. Charles Vaughn, 1306 Fred. Ave., Salisbury (742-7221)  
 22 Triadelphia Reservoir. Contact Danny Bystrak (674-2965)  
 22 Allegany County. James Paulus (395-5178), C.Ferguson (729-3503)  
 26 Southern Dorchester Co. (Blackwater). C. S. Robbins (725-1176)

- Dec. 27 Ocean City. C. S. Robbins (home 725-1176, office 776-4880)  
 28 Crisfield, incl. Irish Grove Sanctuary. Chas. Vaughn (742-7221)  
 28 Chincoteague Refuge, Va. Frederick R. Scott, Richmond (282-2666)  
 29 Baltimore. C. Douglas Hackman, 3033 Woodside 21234 (668-1464)  
 29 Washington County. Mrs. Frances Cutchall, 1847 Va. Ave., Hag'n.  
 29 Bowie  
 30 St. Michaels, Talbot County. Jan Reese (745-2261)  
 30 Annapolis and Gibson Island. Prof. Harold Wierenga (268-1674)  
 30 Lower Kent County.  
 Rock Run, Harford & Cecil Cos. Dr. Edgar Folk (642-6591)
- Jan. 1 Point Lookout. S. Md. Audubon Soc., Ernie Willoughby (994-1600)
- 3 FREDERICK Monthly Meeting. Photos One Year Later, by Rick Warfield and Augie Selckmann Jr. Winchester Hall, 7:30.  
 4 HARFORD Dinner Meeting. Presbyterian Church, Churchville, 6:15.  
 4 ANNE ARUNDEL Monthly Meeting. Summer Trip to Arctic Circle by Tony White. Anne Arundel Co. Library, West St., 8 p.m.  
 12 ANNE ARUNDEL Trip to Cove Pt. & Solomons. 8 a.m. Dick Heise.  
 12 BALTIMORE Trip to Gibson Is. Meet Gibson Is. gate, 9 a.m.  
 12 WASHINGTON Trip to Indian Springs.  
 12 BALTIMORE Junior Meeting. Unusual Pet Show. (467-8221, 955-3389)  
 12 FREDERICK Trip. Birds from the Hodges' Window. 7:30 a.m.  
 14 HARFORD Trip to Bombay Hook Refuge. John Wortman (939-3146)  
 16 ALLEGANY Monthly Meeting. Film Festival, ACC Auditorium, 7:30.  
 17 MONTGOMERY Annual Social. Members bring 4 or 5 birding slides.  
 19 PATUXENT Trip to National Aeronautics and Space Agency, Greenbelt. Meet Montgomery at 9th St., Laurel, 8 a.m.  
 20 BALTIMORE Covered Dish Supper (reservations 833-6679). Birding in Colombia by Dr. Donald H. Messersmith. 5 p.m.  
 20 MONTGOMERY Trip to Gude's Nursery, Rockville.  
 22 WASHINGTON Monthly Meeting. The new Non-Game Section of the Dept. of Natural Resources, Bud Halla. Doub School, 7:30 p.m.  
 22 PATUXENT Monthly Meeting. St. Philips, 6th & Main, Laurel, 7:45.  
 26 BALTIMORE Junior Talk. Weather by Victor Turner. Cylburn, 10.  
 27 MONTGOMERY Trip to Point Lookout for waterfowl & Gt. Cormorants.

#### SPECIAL CHARTER PELAGIC TRIPS FROM OCEAN CITY

Since last winter's charter trip was so popular and so successful, a boat has been chartered for 2 consecutive days, Sat. Feb. 2 and Sun. Feb. 3. Space is limited to 30 persons per day. Reservations at \$12 per day per person for one or both days are strictly on a first paid first served basis. These winter trips are strenuous, cold, wet, at times boring, at times exciting. They are definitely not recommended for those with an aversion to a tossing and pitching boat, or those susceptible to seasickness. Cancellations will be refunded as long as your vacancy can be filled, but \$1 from each registration will be retained as a contribution to the MOS Sanctuary Fund. Full refund will be made if trips are scrubbed because of weather. For registration and details contact Richard A. Rowlett, Apt. 5, 715 Main St., Laurel, Md. 20810 (498-6091).

## FIRST LIST OF CAREY RUN SANCTUARY CONTRIBUTORS

We are pleased to publish this honor roll of persons who responded so promptly to the appeal for funds to purchase the 110-acre addition to our Carey Run Sanctuary. \$10,560 of the \$40,000 purchase price had been received by Oct. 15. Other lists will follow.

Miss Helen Abbey	Dr. Elizabeth G. Fisher	Mr. & Mrs. Howard A. Nash
Miss Edith D. Adkins	Miss Thekla M. Fitzpatrick	Mr. & Mrs. N. Travers Nelson
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	Mr. Charles A. Munn, III	Dr. & Mrs. Lawrence Zeleny

## CONTENTS, SEPTEMBER 1973

Behavior of a Black Rail	<i>Hal Wierenga</i>	87
Sea Birds Wintering off Maryland Shores	<i>Richard A. Rowlett</i>	88
A Salute to Alice S. Kaestner	<i>Shirley H. Geddes</i>	103
Nesting Success of Chesapeake Bay Ospreys in 1973	<i>Jan G. Reese</i>	105
An Unusual Case of Lead Poisoning in a Whistling Swan	<i>Louis N. Locke and Larry T. Young</i>	106
Committees for 1973-74		107
The President's Page	<i>Barclay E. Tucker</i>	109
First Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Maryland	<i>Carl W. Carlson</i>	111
The Season--April, May, June, 1973	<i>Chandler S. Robbins</i>	114
M.O.S. Adult Leadership Training	<i>Education Committee</i>	124
Preserving Natural Areas on School Sites	<i>Dorothy Clark</i>	126
Errata		129
Goose Talk?	<i>Eloise Shaw</i>	130
Statewide "Rare Bird Alert" Network Proposed	<i>Dickson J. Preston</i>	131
Predation by a Barn Owl on a Sparrow Hawk	<i>David S. Lee and Barbara B. Rothgaber</i>	132
Coming Events		132
Special Charter Pelagic Trips from Ocean City	<i>Richard A. Rowlett</i>	134
First List of Carey Run Sanctuary Contributors		135

## MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Published Quarterly by the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.  
to Record and Encourage the Study of Birds of Maryland.

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Laurel, Md. 20810  
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